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Notes on a Journey from Tabríz, Through Kurdistán, via Ván, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbíl, to Suleimániyeh, in July and August, 1836

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Reviewed work(s):

Source: *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, Vol. 8 (1838), pp. 54-101

Published by: [Blackwell Publishing](#) on behalf of [The Royal Geographical Society \(with the Institute of British Geographers\)](#)

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IV.—*Notes on a Journey from Tabríz, through Kurdistán, via Ván, Bitlis, Se'ert and Erbil, to Suleimániyeh, in July and August, 1836.* By Lieut.-Col. J. SHIEL. Communicated by the Hon. W. Fox Strangways. Read February, 1838.

AT Tabríz two routes were proposed to me for reaching the Turkish camp, which was supposed to be situated to the north-east of Mósul. One was by proceeding to Júlámerik,* an independent Chiefship in the mountains of Kurdistán, bordering on Persia, and from thence through Tiyári, the territory of the Kaldání (Chaldæan) or Nestorian Christians, whose almost impracticable country joined to their own warlike character, enables them to avoid rendering obedience or tribute to Turk, Kurd, or Persian, and still corresponds with Xenophon's † character of the Chaldæans: "they are said to be a free people and warlike." The objections to this route were the necessity of assuming the character of a Dervish, that is of travelling under the appearance of great poverty, as my informant said that otherwise there could be no security, and of performing a part of the journey on foot, a portion of the road being totally impracticable for cattle. I therefore selected the route by Ván, although more distant.

July 15th.—We left Tabríz and proceeding in a western direction arrived on the evening of the 17th at the town of Dilmán, situated in the large and fertile valley of Selmás, which is bounded by the Lake of Urumiyah,‡ on the east, and by the mountains of Kurdistán on the west. In this district Armenian Christians are very numerous, and exclusively occupy whole villages; there are also some villages inhabited by Roman Catholics, under the spiritual guidance of a Khalifah or Superintendent, appointed by the Vicar General in Baghdád. Like the Nestorians, these last call themselves Kaldánis, which is probably a national, not a religious designation, while they also style themselves Kátolíks, a name by which they are known all over Kurdistán. A strong mutual antipathy exists between them and the Nestorians. I remember a bishop of the latter church once telling me, that the Armenians were not very good,—the Musselmáns were much worse, but that the vilest of all mankind were the Kátolíks. The contentions of the fifth century are not yet forgotten, and they still retain the doctrine that separated them from the Roman Catholic Church.§ Yet the Nestorians are generally tolerant; they are

* Júlámerk, according to Father Garzoni, who lived eighteen years among the Kárds. (Gramm. Kurda, p. 18.)

† Anabasis iv. iii. 4, vii. viii. 14.

‡ Urumiyah, according to Hájí Khalífeh, and in Armenian, Urmi (Jihán-numá, p. 385); therefore Urumiyah is a corruption.—F. S.

§ See Asseman, Bibl. Orient. Vol. iii. part ii. p. 67 and 199, La Croze, Doucieu, &c. Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. iv. 264, &c.





anxious for instruction, and they have given a welcome reception to some American missionaries who have established themselves in Urumiyah.* The Roman Catholic bishops of Selmás are generally educated at Rome. The present bishop informed me that he had spent fifteen years in the College of the Propaganda, and added to my surprise, knowing the pertinacity with which the Latin language is adhered to in Europe, that the mass and other services were celebrated in the Chaldaean † tongue, which was the only one employed in their books. When I alluded to the contrary practice in Europe, he said that his flock would not submit to any deviation from the customs of their forefathers.

Selmás is also a home for many of the Russian deserters in the service of Persia. Here they marry and settle when they are worn out and unfit for service and form a sort of colony. There are also many Leks ‡ established in Selmás. This is a tribe of the ancient Persian race which dwells chiefly in the south of Persia. They were brought here by Nádir Sháh, but they have forgotten their language, and now speak only Turkish.

Dilmán, commonly called "the City," is a new town built by Amír Khán Kájár, a relation of Fath 'Áli Sháh. There is an old city of the same name placed one farsakh§ to the west, now almost in ruins; the only reason I could discover for removal to the present site, is its greater distance from the Kurds, and therefore greater security. The new town is of considerable extent, and is said to contain 15,000 inhabitants. Like almost all the villages in the district of Selmás, Dilmán is surrounded by gardens; the streets are clean, but the bázárs are poor and ill supplied. Caravans are sent from Dilmán to Ván, Júlámerik, Tiflís, and Erz-Rúm.

Our quarters were in the Mehmán-Kháneh, or Guest-house, a substitute for an inn. This, though in Persia not a very honourable mode of entertainment, is far more convenient, and much less expensive than the usual mode of lodging in the house of a private individual.

July 18th.—We resumed our journey, and were joined on the march by four Kurd horsemen, who were directed to accompany me to Ván by their chief Yehyá || Khán, to whose sister the present King of Persia is married. He is the head of a small tribe called Chehrí, a branch of the powerful tribe of Hekkári which rules over a large portion of the central part of Kurdistán. The chief of Júlámerik is the head of the Hekkáris, but his authority

* See *Missionary Researches in Armenia, &c.* in 1830-31, by Messrs. Smith and Dwight, with an excellent introductory memoir by Mr. Josiah Conder.—ED.

† That is the Syriac, called Chaldean by the natives of Kurdistán.—F. S.

‡ A Kúrd tribe. See *Journal*, Vol. VII. p. 232.

§ Or farsang. Four British miles, for this must be the Tabrízi farsakh, (Ouseley's *Travels*, iii. 376.)—F. S.

|| John.

is only nominal, the tribe being divided among a number of Begs,* who pay him no obedience, and they have rendered themselves almost independent of the Turkish Empire, to which they properly are subject.

The escort was well mounted on prancing Kurd horses: this breed is usually small, but strong, active, and hardy, and derived from the Arab stock: the chief of these Kurds was dressed in the usual gay costume of the better class of his countrymen; short yellow boots, large cloth trousers, two or three jackets of striped cotton, a mantle, and an enormous turban of striped red and white silk and cotton, or of handkerchiefs of a variety of colours. Their arms are, a lance carried on the shoulder, and a large pair of pistols in the girdle. The Kurds are said to excel the Persians in courage and in horsemanship, but the fusil of the latter gives a great advantage, for however prodigal a Kurd may be in exposing his own person, his anxiety for the safety of his steed rarely allows him to encounter the Parthian warfare of the natives of Persia with success.

We passed through the old town of Dilmán, a large portion of which is in ruins. From the number of mounds in the neighbourhood it has the appearance of having been once of considerable extent, and it is described by the Orientalist, St. Martin, as being a very ancient Armenian city. Near the town we saw two very high minarets standing alone in the plain, the mosques to which they were probably attached having fallen to decay; they were said to have been built by the 'Osmánlis, who possessed this part of Persia upwards of a century ago.

My inquiries respecting some ancient sculpture on the face of a mountain near the old town of Dilmán were answered with difficulty: after a long search I discovered that it was half a farsakh to the S.E.; our road was west, and my party having preceded me, together with its being near sunset, obliged me to abandon my intention of visiting it. I learnt that, in the range of hills separating Selmás from the district of Urumiyah, there was some sculpture of a similar description, but whether it has been examined by any European I know not.

Our course was westerly, and two miles after leaving the old town of Dilmán, we entered the hills of Kurdistán: they were small, but of curious shape, as crowns, pyramids, &c. We then turned north-north-west, and ascended the banks of a small stream which runs under Dilmán, and at 9 p.m. the Kurds informed us that we were close to a small deserted Kurd hamlet, and that there was no other habitation for five farsakhs; here we halted for three hours.

July 19th.—We set off at 2 a.m., and ascended through a nar-

* Pronounced by the Turks Bey.

row defile twelve miles in length with low hills on both sides. The road was often excessively bad, which in the dark caused great confusion, and the continued ascent rendered the air so cold, that towards morning a cloak was an insufficient covering. We travelled on the banks of the same stream, each side of which was covered with a profusion of herbs and weeds, and abundance of poppies. At the close of the defile there was an abrupt ascent, and we then entered a valley or rather table-land of considerable extent. After travelling two miles we were opposite to Heráwel-dágh,* which lay about the same distance from us to the west. This mountain had been visible twenty-five miles on the other side of Dilmán, and had then the appearance of great height, but on near approach, it lost much of its apparent altitude.

We soon after passed two Kurd villages, in the neighbourhood of which there was much cultivation, but the habitations in them were of the most wretched description.

We continued our journey through the same undulating valley, and at about the twentieth mile, we were in view of the valley of Elbák,† the entrance of which bore west-south-west ten miles distant; it was said to be five miles wide, and twenty miles in length. It was situated on our left-hand, at the very foot of the black, steep, snow-capped range which rose behind Elbák. The soil we travelled over to-day is Persian, but Elbák belongs to the Hekkári tribe, and is nominally subject to Júlámerik.

This valley was once rich and fertile, though now its wealth is much diminished, which is ascribed to the emigration of many of its Armenian inhabitants after the last war between Russia and Persia. The Kurds highly value the Armenians, whose industry is a source of profit; they treat them well too, better, at all events, than the Persians, among whom it is not uncommon to carry off their daughters, and force them to turn Mohammedans. A Kurd, the chief of a village, once boasted to me, that he had just enticed an Armenian priest to settle in his village; "for now," said he, "when I invite Christians to establish themselves here, and they inquire about a priest, I am able to say to them, here you have him."

After a tedious march of nine hours, in a north-north-west direction, and various ascents and descents among hills, we arrived at the district and village of Kočúr, which are attached to the governorship of Khóï in Persia. Overlooking this village of about sixty houses, is a tolerable mud-fort on a mound, yet it was plun-

* Herawel-dágh is probably the Mount Akrouf of Colonel Monteith's map, and may be estimated at 9000 feet above the sea.—Ed.

† This must be the valley through which the river Záb flows, in a S.W. direction, as, if our maps are correct, here is the source of that river at about 7500 feet above the sea; the valley is the Ali Baugh of Monteith's map.—Ed.

dered in October, 1835, and held possession of during a month, till all the grain was carried off by a branch of the tribe of Hekkári, nominally under the Páshálik of Ván, ruled by two brothers named Khán Mehmüd and Khán Abdál.

We were well received at the village, which is chiefly inhabited by Armenians; the Kedkhodá,* or chief, was extremely civil, and supplied us with the best house, which belonged to an Armenian. A more unclean place I have seldom seen than his dwelling, which brought strongly to my recollection the habits of my dirty old acquaintances in Tibet. "The dingy denizens are reared in dirt" most conspicuously. Every body was filthy and in rags; but their poverty was more apparent than real, for the house we lodged in was crowded, like the generality of the other houses, with cows, calves, buffaloes, &c. The houses were not much higher than four feet outside, but as there was a considerable descent at the entrance, the height was much greater within. These habitations did not differ materially from those described by Xenophon after his entrance into Armenia, and the practice he mentions of the inhabitants and the cattle being lodged in the same house is still preserved. There was no symptom of the beer in jars, to which he alludes in the same passage.

The landlord complained of the oppressions which Armenians living at a distance from large towns endure. He stated that each family paid the priest of the village 12s. and fifty pounds of bread yearly, and a very trifling sum at marriages and funerals; he considered the pay inadequate.

Though the village was small, the cultivation was extensive; oats were growing wild among the barley, but I do not think they are cultivated in any part of Persia.

The village is situated at the foot of a black, bluff, high range, called Haleb dáḡ † of which the direction is about east and west: a stream, called here, Kotúr Cháï,‡ passes close to the village, and after flowing to the eastward, under the city of Khóï, falls into the Aras.§ The distance we travelled to-day was about twenty-eight miles.

July 20th.—We left Kotúr at half-past one, a.m., and crossed to the left bank of the Kotúr Cháï, which flows with a very rapid stream. We then entered a wide defile, named Bálanjik,|| twelve or fourteen miles in length, with the above stream flowing through it. Our general course was west; at about the tenth mile we ascended to the right from the defile, leaving the stream to the left. At about the fifteenth mile, we entered an immense chemen,

* Pronounced at Constantinople, Kyahyá, and spelt Kya by Sir John Macdonald Kinneir. It signifies properly, 'agent, homme d'affaires.'—F. S.

† Apparently Mount Erlan, of Colonel Monteith's map of Armenia.—ED.

‡ Kotur, river.

§ Araxes.

|| Bálanjik, valley.

or meadow, and at twenty-five miles halted at the ruined village of Múllá Hasan, on the bank of a small stream flowing from the south. The horses were let loose to graze in the meadow, but saddled to be ready at a moment's notice. This is the most unsafe part of the road between Khóï and Ván, from the vicinity of the tribe of Khán Mahmúd, who has taken possession of this meadow. During the day, a Kurd of most villainous and wild aspect rode up to our ground: his countrymen of our escort declared that his object was to examine whether we were merchants or Kháns; the latter is the title with which the Kurds have dubbed me at the villages, probably for the purpose of increasing their importance, but the rank is an inconvenient one for my purse. Another Kurd, a very old man, rode up soon after, and complained bitterly of the loss of his cows, which had been stolen last night, and of which he was now in search. This old Kúrd said the meadow was the boundary between Irán and Islám, at which the Persians with me laughed, and it put me in mind of the Spanish question—Were the English Christians? Neither Turk, nor Persian regards the other as a Musselmán.

We mounted again at 3 p.m., and crossed a stream which rises at the eastern extremity of the meadow, and is called the Mehjmúdjik Cháï.* We then entered a defile of the same name, which gradually opened into a valley, and then into a wide plain. The road, as it had been during the entire day's march, was very good. At the thirty-fifth mile from Koṭur, we recrossed to the left bank of the Mehjmúdjik Cháï, which flows into the Erchekjún lake.

We met a small caravan of bullocks carrying wheat from Ván to Khóï. The Kurds are the only people in Persia by whom I have seen bullocks used for carrying burdens.

At about the fortieth mile, the noble mountain of Sípán dágh was visible; it bore N.W.†

After travelling forty-four miles, we halted at sunset at the Armenian village of Erchek: it was only after much altercation that we were able to procure a habitation. A swaggering Turk, dressed in plaid trousers, with an enormous pair of pistols in his belt, acted as master of the ceremonies, and a very uncourteous one he proved. The servants, with the usual craft of Persians, called me a messenger, if not an ambassador, from the king of the Inglís; even the obtuse Turk felt surprised at this announcement, but it altered his demeanor. Although we had been the whole day exposed to the sun, we felt no inconvenience from the heat. We

* Little Mahmúd's river.

† Situated to the north of the Lake of Ván, distant more than sixty miles.—ED.

must, therefore, be considerably elevated above Tabríz,* where mid-day travelling would be now extremely inconvenient.

Erchek contains one hundred houses, which resemble those at Kotúr. The village is about two miles distant from the east side of the Lake Erchekjún. This is a fine sheet of water of an oval shape, its largest diameter being north and south, and perhaps about twelve or fifteen miles in length by eight or nine in width, although the villagers declared the length was at least forty. The water is brackish, and contains small fish of good quality. The lake is bounded by mountains on all sides, excepting the east, where the shores are flat.

July 21st.—We left Erchek at half-past three A.M., and proceeded nearly south along the shore of the lake for nearly three miles, when we were close to its southern extremity. We then passed through some valleys partially cultivated, and over two small passes, the general direction being W.S.W. At about the thirteenth mile after crossing a low pass, we came in view of very fine scenery ; the high scraggy naked rock, of Warak dágħ was six miles distant to the S.E., while to the south lay the plain of Ván covered with villages, gardens, and cultivation. The black rock of Warak† is a remarkable object ; the direction of it is from N.E. to S.W., but the mountain is of no great extent, probably fifteen miles in length ; high among the crags there is a solitary Armenian church, held in deep veneration ; the reason given for placing it there is, that Moses was in the habit of praying upon that spot ; but M. St. Martin‡ says that it owes its sanctity to a cross which was erected on the site of the church by a celebrated female Armenian saint, named Hrhip'hsimé, (Rípsimé,) who suffered martyrdom soon after Christianity was introduced into Armenia. A mile farther on, the lake of Ván was visible, and soon after we beheld the rock of Ván and Sípán dágħ, while the snowy mountains of Erdóz, which bound the southern extremity of the lake, closed the view. Sípán dágħ§ is a splendid mountain ; inferior to Aghrí dágħ|| or Ararat, it perhaps nearly equals Demávend and Savelán in Persia : in appearance it exceeds them, but this may be owing to the absence of other mountains of great height.¶ In shape it resembles

* Tabríz must be from 4,500 to 5,000 feet above the sea, as the mean height of the barometer there in March, 1818, was 25,100 inches.—ED.

† Varak tágħ. St. Martin, Mém. i. 54.—F. S.

‡ Ibid. ii. 427.

§ Seibán of St. Martin (i. 52), but Sípán is, doubtless, right.—F. S.

|| Ibid. i. 42. Jihá-numá, p. 408.

¶ In Colonel Monteith's map of Armenia, Sípán dágħ is marked at 7,000 feet, but it must be nearer 11,000 ; we know that Demávend is 14,500 feet above the sea, or 10,500 above the plain of Tehrán (see p. 72) ; now the level of the lake of Ván is certainly not less than that of Tabríz, probably it may be assumed at 5,000 feet ; and if Sípán dágħ looks equally lofty with Demávend, to an eye accustomed to look at the latter from Tehrán, we may venture to place it at 11,000 feet without much

a truncated cone: it bore from us about N.N.W., and much snow lay on the summit. Macdonald Kinneir places this mountain at the N.W. angle of the lake, which it almost overhangs; but I feel persuaded that it is much nearer to the N.E. corner. The Kurds say that, before resting on Ararat, the ark touched this mountain, upon which Noah exclaimed, “*Subhanú-llah!*” (Praise be to God!) which expression has been converted into Sípán.

We found the villagers ploughing in the plain of Ván. The plough was formed entirely of wood, and, like that used at Uru-miyah, had two wheels, which I had not observed in any other part of Persia, one of the wheels being much larger than the other; the object of this arrangement was unknown, excepting that their fathers followed the same practice. The plough was drawn by eight bullocks.

Is-hak Páshá, the governor of Ván, received me with civility, and assigned me a dwelling in a very pleasant garden-house attached to his own residence. The Persians accuse the Turks of luxury, and they certainly have some idea of comfort in their sitting-rooms. Instead of the nakedness of a Persian apartment, where a carpet is the only furniture, the room was well supplied with comfortable sofas and cushions.

The Páshá was so impatient to see me, that he sent a message that if I did not visit him, he would come to my quarters, which I of course would not allow. Before I could reach him, I was obliged to pass through an array of at least forty servants, attired in all sorts of garments, Turkish, Kurd, Persian, and Arab, besides others of a very fantastic description. He received me standing, pretending to read a note. The Sunnís, or, at all events, the 'Osmánlis, dislike rising to a Christian, and when they wish to be civil, they generally contrive not to be seated when he enters the room. Each nation has its prejudices. A Persian rises, but it is an abomination to him to use the same bath as a Christian, while to this a Turk is indifferent.

The Páshá, who is an 'Osmánlí, not a Kurd, was a very gentlemanlike old man, and so like an European in his dress, that, were it not for his Turkish red cap, he might have passed for an Italian or a Spaniard. We drank sherbet, coffee, and tea, while he read the letters of which I was the bearer. He strongly expressed his desire to be of use to any one employed in the business of the King of England, between whom (praise be to God!) and the Ali 'Othmán, the house of 'Osmán, there was now, as there always had been, an intimate alliance. The Páshá then sent for

chance of error. It would be an invaluable service rendered to physical geography if some traveller would carry a good mountain barometer throughout this elevated land of Armenia.—*Ed.*

his Visier,* to consult him regarding the best road for proceeding to Reshíd Páshá's camp. It appeared that they were in complete ignorance of the present position of Reshíd Páshá, and could not determine whether he was at Dyár-bekir, Jezíreh-ibn-'Omar,† or Mósul. The plan he recommended was to proceed to Jezíreh, and there endeavour to discover Reshíd Páshá's movements. To that city there are three roads,—one by Bitlís ‡ and Se'rd,§ and the others directly south through the centre of Kurdistán. The first was the least difficult and safest, though the longest; the other routes were very difficult from mountainous and bad roads; and, in addition to this, the Páshá was apprehensive that the Hek-kári and other Kurd chiefs, through whose territories I must pass, would not, now that they were relieved from alarm by the distance of Reshíd Páshá, allow me to proceed on my journey, which their suspicions would induce them to consider as relating to themselves. The Páshá said that any accident that might occur to me would be a discredit to him, and that, therefore, he would send messengers to those chiefs, whose country was not more than thirty miles south of Ván, so that I should not be detained more than two days.

The Páshá visited me in the evening, accompanied by his son, a handsome boy of ten years of age. So great is the deference towards parents among Oriental nations, that the boy did not sit down in the presence of his father, who ordered him out of the room while he drank tea. During three days I was the guest of the Páshá. Early each morning the Kehveh Altí || was sent to me; this consisted of bread, cream, honey, curds, and then coffee; hence the name Kehveh Altí (under the coffee). Some fifteen or twenty dishes were brought for my solitary breakfast and dinner. Contrary to the inconvenient custom of the Persians, where the dinner is placed on the ground, and all eat by stooping down to the dishes, here an immense pewter tray five feet in diameter was placed on a low stool, and covered with food; but Turkish cookery is an abomination. Each dish, whether of meat or vegetables, was filled with grease and curds, and the favourite sherbet consisted of milk, sugar, and garlic, several bulbs of the latter being in the bowl.

Is-hák Páshá spoke with great enthusiasm of the improving condition of Turkey, and particularly of the army; he described the redif,¶ or militia, to be established all over European Turkey,

* Vezír.

† Properly Jezíreh Beni-'Omar, *i.e.* the Island of the Children of 'Omar. 'Omar, being a proper name, cannot take the article. It is more commonly called Jezíreh alone.—F. S.

‡ Bidlís. Jihan, p. 415.

§ Se'ert.

|| 'The sub-coffee' or substratum of the coffee drinking; an ante-breakfast.—F. S.

¶ Redif, a pursuivant in Arabic.—F. S.

and in some parts of Anátolí, or Asiatic Turkey. His ignorance on certain points was strange: he inquired if England and India were east or west from Constantinople, and where Austria lay.

The scenery at Ván is the most beautiful I have seen in Asia: the town is situated in a large plain, said to be twelve farsakhs* in circuit, studded with villages and gardens. The imposing mountains of Warak, Sípán, and Erdóz, are in full view, bounding the plain on the N.N.W. and S.E., while to the west lies the beautiful lake of Ván, distant one mile and a half. The rock of Ván is a most striking object. It is shaped somewhat like a camel's back, rising in the centre and falling at both ends. The ridge runs east and west, and is about 600 yards long, divided into three parts, each of which is about 200 yards in length. The rock stands alone, without any other hills in the vicinity, and is therefore more remarkable in its appearance. The middle and highest part is separated from the two ends by dikes, which are cut through the solid rock, so that each part is a separate fortification, the capture of either extremity by no means ensuring that of any other portion. The middle division is about 120 feet in height, and perpendicular on the south side; on the north it is formed in part of a very abrupt rock and in part of an earthy slope, but very steep and strong; the height of the two other positions at the lower part is twenty feet, and the whole rock is encompassed with a wall of stones and earth, with bastions, some of which are square, and the others round. On that part of the north face, where earth takes the place of rock, there are no less than five successive tiers of walls and bastions. The town is placed under the southern face of the rock, and is enclosed with a wall of mud and stone, having large round and small square bastions, protected, though not on all sides, by a ditch. The population, including the suburbs, which are placed in the gardens outside the walls, is said to consist of 12,000 people, of whom 2,000 are Armenians, who are very numerous in this Páshálik. The other inhabitants of the town are chiefly Turks, the Kurds being few. As usual in Turkey, the little trade the town possesses is in the hands of Armenians; the town contains two large churches, four large mosques, two baths, and two caravanserais; though the streets are narrow, the town is tolerably clean; the houses are built of mud and bricks, and, contrary to the practice of Persia, where nothing but a gloomy wall meets the eye, every dwelling has latticed windows to the street, and many have wooden rooms at the top, overhanging the street, where the 'Osmánlis sit and smoke. Over every door the words "Allahu Akber" (God

* Forty-three English miles.—F. S.

is great) are inscribed. The bázars are few, and chiefly inhabited by Armenian weavers and mercers. The manufactures are the coarse cotton chintzes worn by the Kurds and Turks; cotton and corn are imported from Persia, for which money is paid.

The lake is described by Macdonald Kinneir to be twenty-five or thirty miles in length, and from nine to twelve in breadth, yet it has the appearance of being double that extent, and in fact a much greater size is attributed to it by the inhabitants: the water is brackish, but drinkable; a few boats are employed on it in trading between Ván, Akhlát, and Tedván,* on the west side; yet, though we marched several days on the shores of the lake, not one was to be seen. At a village near Ván I saw a boat on the stocks; it was formed of planks six feet in length, six inches in breadth, and fastened with iron nails; the length of the boat was about forty feet, the bottom was flat, and eight feet in breadth, while the top was about twenty.

Ván, from its strength and favourable position near the lake, was probably a place of importance in very remote antiquity, and this is in some degree confirmed by various inscriptions; on the south face of the highest part of the rock, sixty or seventy feet from the ground, there is an inscription about five feet by four in size. Intervening houses prevented a nearer inspection than 150 yards, and even with a good telescope, I was only able to conjecture that it was in the arrow-headed character. I have since learned what I was then ignorant of, that this inscription had been examined and copied by Dr. Schultz, the German traveller, who was murdered near Júlamérík, in 1829,† and who found it to be in the arrow-headed character. This gentleman is reported to have suspended himself from the top by ropes, in which position he copied the inscription. The interior of the fort is said to contain other inscriptions of the same kind, but the Páshá declined giving me permission to view it, alleging that he himself was not allowed to enter the fort without the sanction of the Ser-'asker Páshá of Erz-Rúm, under whose government he is placed.

The climate of Ván is extremely severe; none of the fruit was yet ripe: snow falls about the 20th of November, and sometimes remains six months; a portion of the lake is frozen in very severe winters.

* Tátván, remarkable on account of Khosrev Páshá's caravanserai, chapel, mosque, and baths, built A. H. 980=A.D. 1573. Jihán-numá, p. 415.—F. S.

† Professor Schultz, of the University of Giessen, undertook a journey of literary research in Asiatic Turkey and Persia, under the auspices of Baron Damas, in 1826. For some account of his discoveries at Ván, and its environs, where he copied forty-two inscriptions in the cuneiform character, see his letter to M. St. Martin, in the *Nouveau Journal Asiat.* for 1828, Vol. ii. p. 160—188. This enterprising and much-to-be lamented traveller, on his second journey from Constantinople in 1829, was murdered, it is said, near Júlamerk, or near Derch, in the valley of the Záb.—F. D.

As the Páshá's servants had seen me use a pocket sextant, he sent me a request in the evening to be allowed to examine the moon with it: soon after he returned it, with the remark, that he was unable to distinguish in the least degree better what was passing either in the moon or in any of the stars.

July 22.—The Páshá's messenger not having returned on the 22nd, I resolved to continue my journey by the road of Bitlís: for this purpose, it was necessary to proceed through the territory of Khán Mehmúd, a Kurd chief, nominally under the control of the Páshá of Ván, but who not only paid him no submission, but had lately seized a district called Khavasúr, which had previously been under the authority of the Páshá. This Khán Mehmúd was evidently considered as a very formidable person, and it was obvious that the Páshá did not feel assured in what light he would regard my visit to Reshíd Páshá. His minister, therefore, invited me to dinner, and I there met an agent of Khán Mehmúd, under whose protection I was formally placed. He assured me that his chief would have much pleasure in seeing me, and recommended me to quit the main road and visit him in his castle of Pasvákh. To this arrangement I feigned to acquiesce, though I must confess, without having the least intention of fulfilling it. This agent was a very pleasant, chatty, ignorant fellow, with that sharp knavish look which distinguishes Kurds from the heavy solemn aspect of the 'Osmánlís. He had never before heard of the Yengí Dunyá,* (America,) and was thunderstruck on learning that some of the inhabitants never used clothes: he inquired if they could speak.

During the time we were at Ván, three deserters from the Russian army made their appearance; one was a German, the others Poles. They had deserted from Eriéván, but were unable to explain by what road they had contrived to reach Ván. All they knew was, that they had passed through the country of the Kurds, by whom they had been plundered of their clothes: their wish was to reach Constantinople by accompanying an Armenian caravan.

St. Martin, the historian of Armenia, says, that according to the traditions of the Armenians, Ván is a very ancient city, having been founded by Semiramis, and called by her Shemiramgerd: this account appears to be confirmed by the researches of Professor Schultz, who is said to have conceived that he deciphered the word Shemiram in one of the arrow-headed inscriptions which he copied. So late as the fourteenth century there existed buildings which the inhabitants attributed to the ancient sovereigns of Asia, and which were of such ponderous construction, that they resisted the efforts of the soldiers of Tímúr Leng for their destruction. Ruined by the course of time, the city of Semiramis was rebuilt

* New World.

by King Ván, who lived a short time previously to the expedition of Alexander the Great, and bestowed his own name on it; but, having again fallen into decay, it was restored by Vagh-Arshag,* brother to Arsaces, the first king of Armenia of the race of the Arsacidæ, about one hundred and fifty years before Christ. The city fell successively under the domination of the Seljükís, of Tímúr Leng, of the Turkománs, and finally, it was captured by the 'Osmánlís in 1533, and has remained in their possession ever since that period.

The Greek name given to the Lake of Ván, or at least that ascribed to it by Ptolemy, according to St. Martin, is Arsissa, which is supposed to be derived from Arjísh, a town on the northern side of the lake under Sípán-dágh; by the Armenians the lake is called Akhtamár,† which is the name of an island west of Vastán, and also of a large village on the shores of the lake seven miles south-west of the city: this village is by the 'Oşmanlís called Artemíd. In some old maps I have seen Ván called Artemita.‡

The Páshálik of Ván is nominally of large extent, but the authority of the Páshá reaches but little beyond the plain in which the city is placed, excepting to the north, where the towns on the shores of the lake, and those under Sípán-dagh, Akhlát, Arjish, Eljaras,§ Bégerí,|| and Albák, are under his control. Several tribes of Cháder-Nishín (tent-dwelling) Kurds live in the northern part of the Páshálik of Ván, which reaches to the territory of Báyazíd. These are the Häideránlús of 1500 tents, the Sipkí of 1000 tents, the Shúlú of 200 tents, Hamzeh-begí 200 tents, who have the reputation of being excellent cavalry. On the west, Ván is bounded by the territory of Bitlís,¶ but this part of the Páshálik, as well as that on the south, is almost entirely in the hands of Khán Mehmúd.

Five miles south of Ván, is a low range of hills, on the south side of which is the valley of Khavasúr, inhabited by Armenians, which has been seized by Khán Mehmúd. Khavasúr reaches from Warak-dágh on the east, to the valley of Vastán, which lies between the lake at its southern extremity and the Erdóz range. To these mountains Macdonald Kinneir gives the names of Haterash and Hertowshee, but neither of these names is employed by the inhabitants.** South of Khavasúr, and bounded on the south by a high range called Sú-suzán-dágh,†† is the large

* Valarsaces.

† In Turkish and Persian, Aghtamar in Armenia, in which *gh* is substituted for *h*, Boghos being equivalent to Paulos.—F. S.

‡ Artemita, a Parthian city, is mentioned by Tacitus, vi. 41.

§ 'Adu-ljeváz.—J. N. p. 411. || Bágirí.—F. S.

¶ Properly Bidlís.—F. S.

** He probably misunderstood his guides who spoke in Turkish-Persian.—F. S.

†† Waterless Mountains, the *án* is a Persian termination added to the Turkish phrase *sú suz*, 'waterless.'—F. S.

district of Mehlmúdiyah, of which Khúsh-áb* is the capital. It is the hereditary territory of Khán Mehmód, and reaches from Elbág† on the east, to the western extremity of the Erdóz range, which bounds lake Ván on the south. South of Sú-suzán-dágh lies the mountain of Sháh-dágh,‡ with a town of the same name said to be sixteen hours distant from Ván. The town is the capital of the large district and tribe called Hertaushí, nominally under Ván, but perfectly independent. All these valleys are narrow; south of Hertaushí is 'Amádiyah.

Between Ván and Vastán lies the valley of Kavásh, placed between the lake and Erdóz range. The capital of this district is Pasvakh, a strong fort, now the residence of Khán Mehmód, in one of the crags of Erdóz.

South of Erdóz is the chiefship of Ispert, between which and Buhtán§ lies the district of Mukusú: the Beys of these districts are under no subjection; besides which, almost every hill possesses a fort where the owner resides in independence. Buhtán is a large district stretching on the south to Jezíreh-ibn 'Omer, which until it was taken possession of by Reshíd Páshá, was the capital. Amádiyah seems to bound it on the east and Se'ert on the west.

The above is the information I was able to collect during my stay of two days at Ván, from the few people with whom I was in communication; and must be received with caution. The Páshá had given orders, under the pretence of preventing me from being disturbed, and I am unable to assign the real motive, that no one should have access to me. I may here notice the difficulty of obtaining information in Kurdistán. An 'Osmánlí is generally in profound ignorance of everything not passing before him. A Kurd is more intelligent, but too commonly answers to any question regarding mountains, rivers, or roads—"God knows! how should I know?" Besides this, except in large towns, the Kurds rarely understand any language but their own; but the greatest impediment to information is their extreme suspiciousness. My usual introduction to each village, was the report that there was not a mountain, village, stream, or road which I did not write down; and when making use of a pocket compass, the guides often taxed me with endeavouring to find a road for cannon to conduct the Persians to the aid of Reshíd Páshá to subdue the Kurds. Between Salmás and Ván the road is in general good.

July 23rd.—The messenger whom the Páshá had despatched

* Khúsh-áb—sweet-water.

† Elbák (J. N. p. 420). In Armenian Agpag. St. Martin, i. 177.—F. S.

‡ King's Hill.

§ Bahdínán (the people of good faith).

not having returned, we left Ván in the evening accompanied by a single Kurd, who was to proceed with us to Bítlís. The Vizier explained that it would make no difference if we were accompanied by one or one hundred men, as no one would dare to molest us without the orders of Khán Mehmúd, and if he was averse to our proceeding, the presence of a large or small guard would make no difference in the impediments by which he could oppose our progress.

In return for the civilities of the Páshá, I sent him a watch, with which I heard he was greatly delighted. He soon afterwards sent me a pony which, being perfectly useless to me at the time, I begged he would keep until my return. His attendants, and perhaps he himself, were much offended at my declining his present: they said, that if I did not choose to accept it, I might at least have had the civility to examine the Páshá's horse, praise his points, swear he was of high value and breed, and then request the Páshá's master of the horse to take charge of him until my return. It was impossible not to feel that the 'Osmání ideas of courtesy were more refined than those of the Feringí.

We skirted the lake for four miles, and having reached the southern extremity, turned to the west and reached Artemid three miles farther on. This is a large Armenian village of about 350 houses, placed on some heights above the shores of the lake, and completely buried in orchards, throughout which the houses are dispersed. It has no appearance of antiquity, nor were there any mounds or traces of ruins in the vicinity. The civilities of the Páshá were still continued; an excellent dinner was in readiness on our arrival, and food was supplied for our horses.

July 24th.—We mounted at half-past three A.M. The road was exceedingly bad in some places, and at times over a perfectly smooth rock, where it would seem impossible for a horse to travel; but a Persian horse will go anywhere. Occasionally the road led us close to the lake, which was clear and blue like the sea.* Three miles after leaving Artemid we were in the territories of Khán Mehmúd. At six miles we crossed the mouth of the Khavasúr valley, and at seven miles the Khúsháb river flowing from the east nearly. Our course was now about west; the lake was close to us on the right, while the black mountains of Erdóz were about two miles distant on the left: these mountains are very high, and at a distance have a particularly rugged aspect. We were now in Vastán, an undulating valley of three miles in breadth. Ten miles from Artemid we reached the fort of Vastán,† a royal residence in the eleventh century, but now without a

* So the lake of Urmíyah, which is thence called Kabudán (blue) by the Armenians. St. Martin, Mém. i. 59.

† Or Usdán, in the territory of Rhesh-duni.—St. Martin, i. 141.

trace of greatness. The fort, a small mud building, is placed on a hill overhanging the lake, while the village and gardens are under Erdóz. Our Kurd attendant insisted that we should ascend to the fort to eat the Kehweh-Altí. The 'Osmánlis appear unable to travel without resting frequently. Subsequently when I had 'Oşmanlı guides, we never passed a fort or village without their proposing, "Let us enter and rest ourselves: let us eat: let us take some coffee; and let us have a Chibúk." The governor, a very ferocious-looking Kurd, with only half an upper-lip, and his garrison of half-a-dozen men received me very civilly. It had been thought necessary to send a messenger to Khán Meh-múd to inform him of our approach, but I found that he had only just left Vastán. I became a good deal incensed, and expressed my anger in warm terms. The garrison understood very little Turkish, and took high offence at what they imagined to be an invective directed against Khán Meh-múd, but I soon pacified them by a small present in return for the Kehweh-Altí.

Leaving Vastán, we continued our journey by the side of the lake, and after travelling a few miles we entered the valley of Kavásh, which is a continuation of that of Vastán, and presents the same appearance, Erdóz being upon the left four or five miles distant, and the lake on the right hand. About the seventeenth mile from Artemid, we were opposite to the rocky island of Akhtamár, which St. Martin supposes to have given its name to the lake. On the island, which, however, seems really to be two islands close together, are a much venerated church and a monastery, both visible from the shore: they were once affluent, but were despoiled of their wealth some years ago, by Khán Meh-múd, the powerful Rob Roy of this part of Kurdistán, or rather Armenia, for such it may more truly be called, almost all the villages being inhabited by that people. A few miles further on, we were opposite to the small island of Limn,* which was said to be five miles distant from us, and to be uninhabited. At about the twenty-fourth mile from Artemid we were opposite to Pasvákh, the residence of Khán Meh-múd. We could distinguish the castle among the rocks of Erdóz. At about the thirty-fourth mile we reached the Armenian village of Núr Kúh, distant about one mile from the lake, and situated in a plain, much of which is in cultivation. The valley of Kavásh contains many villages.

The dames of Kurdistán are not held in the same restraint as their neighbours in Persia and Turkey. Among the Kháneh-nishín, (the dwellers in houses,) only women of high rank conceal their faces; but among the dwellers in tents all exhibit their

* Limn opposite to Amig.—St. Martin, i. 137.

features without reserve. The women, among the latter, acquire great control in their families, and have considerable intercourse with the men of their encampment. It is very common for the young men to run away with the young women of another tribe or encampment, which produces violent quarrels, for a Kurd resents an affront of this nature with almost the same vindictiveness as a blood-feud. The Kurd who accompanied me from Ván, in speaking of his countrymen, said, that the dwellers in houses were a bad race, but that the dwellers in tents were beasts, and not to be included among mankind. It is certain that they are, if possible, greater liars than the inhabitants of Persia.

July 25th.—We left Núr Kúh at half-past two A.M., and soon after entered a wide defile, eight miles in length, which was closed by a steep ascent, a short distance beyond which we passed under the high peak of 'Akad,* which lay between the road and the lake: here Demir-dágh, the Iron Mountain, a branch of Nem-rúd-dágh, was visible. We then travelled ten miles through a mountainous country, ascending and descending alternately. The mountains, which had hitherto been naked rocks or bare earth, now began to assume a more pleasing appearance; they were here tolerably covered with verdure, and occasionally with open woods of stunted oaks. At about the eighteenth mile we descended a steep hill to the valley of Pasvákh, where we were again near the lake which we had quitted after leaving Núr Kúh. Here we halted two hours at the village of Gúleh. After this, we again left the lake, which was hid by intervening hills, and travelled eight or nine miles to the village of Súrp. This is a large village pleasantly situated close to a small bay in the lake, with high mountains behind, thickly covered with shrubby oaks. This was the termination of Khán Mehímúd's country. We then travelled along the face of hills, over a very narrow, bad road, overhanging the lake, and passed close to the pretty village of Harzúk, situated in a nook which defends it from the cold in winter. In Kurdistán, near the villages, there is generally a considerable quantity of cultivation, but all the rest is waste. We finished our journey of about twelve hours on horseback, or thirty-five miles, at the large village of Almaliyah, belonging to Bitlís. It is placed near the lake, and is surrounded by orchards. As usual, we underwent the process of being guests. This practice is so habitual in these countries, though not in Persia, that it is usual to count journeys by the same word; thus the distance from Ván to Bitlís would be described by saying, it is four Gonakhs* or guests. The solitude of our march was very striking; no caravans, no travellers, not

* 'Akád-tágh. Knot-Mount?—F. S.

† The author means Kónáks; but that word signifies “resting-places,” “sleeping-places,” not “guests.”

even a Dervish, who is seen almost everywhere, interrupts the silence of these mountains.

The practice of medicine seems to be of a violent description in Kurdistán ; suited, perhaps, to the rough, uncouth manners of the inhabitants. The Kurd who was with me, happening to have a fit of the ague, stripped himself stark naked, which is considered highly indecent in all Mohammedan countries ; but, according to his own account, being only a tent-dweller, he was a beast, and he then jumped into the lake. His ablution was so little beneficial, that he was soon unable to ride, and found it necessary to mount one of the baggage-ponies.

July 26th.—We mounted at five A.M., and reached Bitlís at ten, about twenty miles. After travelling about three miles through the valley of Almaliyah, we ascended a height and left the lake, having reached its western shore. We proceeded through a plain or valley which was said to extend to Músh : at the eighth mile we were opposite to Demir-dágh and Nemrúd, which were distant about two and five miles respectively, and bore about north. At a distance they both have the appearance of high mountains, which they probably are, but a nearer approach destroys that impression. They rise abruptly from the plain over which we were travelling. We then turned nearly south, having been previously marching about west, and entered a wide defile, with a stream flowing through it, called here Bitlís Shúi,* which is said to rise in Demir-dágh. We descended almost imperceptibly for nine or ten miles, and then reached the city of Bitlís.

We were lodged in the Governor's house, a large stone square building inclosing a wide court, and placed on the top of a high hill, where it stood alone, overhanging a part of the city. The Governor, a Kurd Beg, named Sherif Beg, was absent in Reshíd Páshá's camp ; but his wife sent his two young sons to congratulate me on my arrival, which they did with the graceful manners one usually finds in Asiatic children of high rank. The Beg's house, in point of furniture, was in a wretched condition ; but it possessed strength, which, probably, was the only thing he cared for. A balcony, or verandah,† fifteen feet high, surrounding the court, leads into a number of rooms, few of which had even a ragged carpet to conceal the stone floor. The Anderún or haram‡ is, however, the place to see the comfort of a Mohammedan, for in that sanctuary he can enjoy it unmolested, and without its being made a plea for extortion. We were, of course, the lady's guests,

* River of Bitlís.

† Varanda, a word borrowed by the Portuguese from the Hindús. To it our Anglo-Indians commonly append the letter *h*, which they as commonly omit in Arabic words, where it ought to be written.—F. S.

‡ Interior.

but her cookery was abominable ; the usual curds and garlic were predominant, together with apricots stewed in grease.

The court contained a number of horses ready saddled, in which state they continue the whole day, but at night they are unsaddled : the answer to my inquiries was, that it was prudent to be prepared for every event, for no one could tell what might happen in Kurdistán. I found this to be a general practice.

The city of Bitlis* has a very remarkable appearance : it is placed in a wide ravine, which is open to the east but closed by high mountains to the west ; the houses are dispersed over the sides of the steep banks of the stream which runs through it, and on several neighbouring hills. The form of the town is, therefore, most irregular ; the houses are built of red stone, which is cut into square blocks, and the generality are of two stories, with grated windows to the street, which produces more resemblance to the towns of Europe than to those of Persia. Like Ván, the streets are paved with round stones. From the irregular manner in which the houses are scattered over the hills, intermingled with gardens, the town covers a considerable extent of ground : it is not inclosed by a wall ; but this is scarcely necessary, each house being in fact a fortress, and a strong one too. The town is said to contain 1500 houses, of which 500 are occupied by Armenians.† To this class belong the bakers, butchers, grocers, &c. of the city, they being considered *pure*, in a religious sense, by the Sunnis ; while in Persia it has sometimes happened, that they are not even allowed to purchase bread at the same shops as the Mohammedans : on the other hand, a Turk will on no account use the salutation “Selàmun 'Aléikum” to a Christian, which a Persian does not scruple to do.

Bitlis contains four caravanserais, three large and twelve small mosques,‡ three baths, eight Armenian churches, and one Nestorian : the large mosques have each one very tall minaret, which has a pleasing effect, and they are said to be very ancient Mohammedan buildings. Of butchers, bakers, gun-smiths, and silversmiths, the number is very considerable, there being nearly twenty of each trade. The principal manufacture is coarse striped cotton cloth, and the chief export is tobacco. Pears, apples, plums,

* Bitlis stands in lat. $38^{\circ} 40'$ N., long. $41^{\circ} 57'$ E., according to Colonel Monteith's *Map of Armenia* ; and in lat. $38^{\circ} 34'$ long. $42^{\circ} 30'$ E., according to M. Lapie in the Notes to M. Jaubert's *Voyage en Arménie*, p. 475. Macdonald Kinneir in 1814 made its lat. $38^{\circ} 35'$, long. $42^{\circ} 50'$ E. Astronomical observations are much wanted here as well as at Ván.—ED.

† Kinneir, in 1814, says, 12,000 persons, one-half of which are Christians, *Journey through Armenia*, &c. p. 394 ; and 26,000 in *Geographical Survey of Persia*, p. 331, including the neighbouring villages.—ED.

‡ Kinneir says, about thirty mosques and eight churches, p. 394 ; but if half the population be Armenian, this number of mosques is probably inaccurate.—ED.

apricots, grapes, melons, cucumbers, lettuces, cabbages, and other vegetables, come to perfection. The climate is cooler than at Tabriz, though much warmer than in the country we had lately travelled through.

The most remarkable object in Bitlís is the old castle, which is placed in the centre of the town, on a rock thirty feet in height, and built up with stone to the elevation of about one hundred feet; the walls are extremely thick, and a single gate leads through the narrow passage which gives admission to the fort. The extent of the inside may be 120 yards; it is now in ruins and filled with old houses. The wall is strengthened by several square bastions on the outside: at the height of sixty feet there is an inscription in Arabic, cut in stone. An old man informed me that, within his own remembrance, there was an inscription on the wall which stated that the castle was built 300 years before Mohammed.

The women at Bitlís walk about with very little concealment of their faces, and display that very ugly Asiatic ornament, common in India, the nose-ring; this appendage is not worn in Persia.

A very reverend-looking Múllá paid me a visit during breakfast: he drank a tumbler of undiluted rum, talked of Columbus, and Napoleon, and of an Englishman he had seen in Bitlís twenty years ago, Macdonald Kinneir no doubt: he took his departure, praying me to come and drink with him at Músh, where he resided.

The territory of Bitlís extends twelve hours towards Se'rt, twelve towards Músh, four towards Diyárbekir, and four towards Ván. The only notice which St. Martin takes of this city is, that it has been almost always governed by Kurd Begs, whose subjects are the most civilised of their race.

July 27.—Accompanied by two guides on foot, we left Bitlís at eight A.M., and descended to the Bitlís Cháï, which is the only name by which the river is here known. We proceeded at first down the left bank, and then passed over to the other side, by one of the numerous neat stone bridges by which it is crossed: the road lay through the narrow defile which is formed by the stream, and was the worst, if not the only really bad one we encountered. The path was high above the river, and sometimes so narrow as scarcely to give room for the horses' hoofs, and at other times so impeded by large stones, that our progress did not exceed one mile an hour. At about the fifth mile the road was crossed by a high ridge of rock which reached to the stream. Instead of carrying the path over it, an opening was cut through the solid rock of fifteen feet in width and height, and twenty feet in length. There was no inscription

on it, and the answer of the guides to my inquiry was the usual one of “God knows.” At the tenth mile, fatigued by the heat which our descent down the stream had increased considerably, and by the badness of the road, we halted a short time under some walnut-trees. The Persian muleteer cursed himself, his luck, and avarice, that brought him to such a country; and he subsequently had ample reason for repentance, for long before we finished our journey four of his cattle died, besides two of my own horses. The ravine, particularly on the left bank, was enclosed by very high mountains, which probably were offsets from Erdóz: our guides’ ignorance of the Turkish language rendered it impossible to obtain any information from them: the mountains were clothed with woods of oak, and the banks of the stream were covered with walnut-trees, mulberries, raspberries, vines, and abundance of herbs, but all enjoyment was destroyed by the heat and fatigue. During the march we changed our guides for two others. Unlike the guides of Macdonald Kinneir, who complains bitterly of their violence and rudeness, we found them alert, civil, and good-humoured. These men were armed with a rifle-fire-lock, swords, daggers, and a basket-shield studded with brass knobs: their rifles have a piece of iron two inches high, near the lock, with five or six small holes which serve for sights, and excellent shots are said to be made with them. From the mountainous nature of the country, there is very little cavalry in this and the adjacent part of Kurdistán, but every man has a rifle, and therefore the irregular infantry is numerous.

We met a caravan of mules proceeding to Bitlís from Shírwán, said to be eight hours south-east, with salt. They regarded us with astonishment, few Persians ever coming to this part of Kurdistán. My own dress being almost entirely Persian, I was always taken for an inhabitant of that country, and was constantly addressed with the words, “O son of ’Ajem, where goest thou?” At about the twelfth mile from Bitlís we passed close to an old castle, with a ruined caravanserai, on the opposite side of the road: the castle was a square fort with bastions, and was built of large uncut stones and mortar: it looked old, but the only attainable information regarding it was, that it was built by a person named Kái Fendük, but who he was, or when he existed, was unknown.

At the sixteenth mile we crossed over a stone bridge to the left bank of the stream, which was rapid and deep, though not more than twelve yards in width: at about the twentieth mile we ascended a high mountain in a south direction, and left the river, which flowed to the west. The ascent was most fatiguing to our exhausted cattle: we then descended to the district of Várkhán, and at eight in the evening, completely worn out, reached the large village of the same name. Although we had been ten hours

on horseback I do not think we travelled a greater distance than twenty-six miles, yet so great was the fatigue, that I doubt whether the horses ever recovered from the effect of it.

So great was the change of climate, that we found Indian corn growing here: the night being too hot to sleep in a house, we spread our carpet under some trees. Close to us was Sherif Beg, the Governor of Bitlís, who had just returned from the camp of Reshíd Páshá. He sent me a dinner of curds, grapes, milk, and that most indigestible of dishes, a wheat piláú. Soon afterwards he came to see me, that he might request me to tell Reshíd Páshá that his country was in excellent order, and that I had been well treated. He was a dashing Kurd of twenty-five years of age, and chiefly remarkable for his dress. It consisted of short yellow boots, blue cloth trousers of prodigious dimensions, three jackets of silk and cloth of different colours, and one of them with sleeves two yards in length; a wide silk sash round his waist, and an enormous turban of silk of every colour: a white Arab cloak was thrown round him, and a dagger, long pistols in his belt, and a sword completed his equipment. In Kurdistán, the sword is worn with the edge to the rear, which the Kurds contend is the best method for drawing the weapon. This dress is very fantastic, but very gay, and is imitated by every one, more or less, according to his means. The lower classes wear the coarse woolen manufactures of their villages, made into a short jacket and trousers. The Armenian villagers can scarcely be said to wear any dress at all: it is generally made of shreds and patches, and the marvel is, how the man gets in and out of it, if he ever takes that trouble. Instead of trousers, the Armenian women wear what the Persian women call trousers of one leg, by which expression a petticoat is meant; they wear, as is customary among the Armenians, a large white cotton veil, and the unbecoming slip of white cloth with which they partially conceal the mouth.

July 28.—We left Várkhán at seven A.M., and soon after arrived near a small stream, down the left bank of which we travelled: the only name I could obtain for it was the Se'rt Sú or river. We crossed it several times, and at the eleventh mile it was twenty-five yards wide, but shallow and not rapid, contrary to the appearance of the Bitlís Cháü, or river. We passed a caravan travelling to that city with tobacco and wheat. We saw a number of cotton-fields, which, as well as the hot wind which blew the greater part of the day, showed that we had got into a very different climate from that of Ván. We continued to descend, though not abruptly, by a tolerably good road through an open country; the woods became more scanty, and the mountains decreased much in size. At about the twentieth mile we saw a high range straight and steep, running from about north-north-east, to south-south-west, which

was perhaps thirty miles from us to the south-east. Nothing was known of them excepting that they were in Búhtán. After being eleven hours on horseback we arrived at Se'rt,* but I do not think the distance was more than twenty-four miles: the fatigue of yesterday's march had nearly disabled our horses.

Se'rt, or properly Ise'rd,† is placed in the midst of a large undulating plain without a single tree, surrounded at a considerable distance by high mountains. The quantity of cultivation in the vicinity of the city is great, particularly of melons and cucumbers: in the midst of each field there is a small stone house, well loop-holed, for the protection of the property. There are at least twenty of these edifices in the neighbourhood of Se'rt, which give it the appearance of being surrounded by a number of small forts. The town is about two miles and a half in circuit, inclosed by a wall of stone and lime, with round and square bastions, but destroyed in many places, and without any ditch. A great part of the space inside the wall has no buildings, and the city is said not to contain more than 1000‡ houses of Kurds, Arimenians, and Nestorians. There are three large mosques, and several small ones, two churches, five baths, and one caravanserai. The Governor's house is a large building sunk in a deep moat, which can be filled with water: this castle has bastions and loop-holes in abundance. The houses are all arched and built of stone, with very thick walls; but this does not diminish the heat of the interior. My title of Elchí § was of very little service to me at Se'rt; I was put into a house so insufferably offensive and hot, that it was impossible to sleep in it. The Governor's hospitality induced him to send me a solitary bowl of milk for dinner, and the habit of being well entertained in the large towns made me fancy that he had behaved ill; in fact he had done so according to the notions of the country.

The nearest road to Jezireh-ibn 'Omer was on the left bank of the Bitlís Chaï (?), and through Búhtán, which it was my intention to pursue, if possible. The distance was only sixteen hours, but I was informed that it was utterly impracticable, as the Beg of Búhtán was in rebellion, and had killed some people belonging to Reshid Páshá. The impracticability of the road was pointed out to me by the fact that three hundred men were about to proceed to join Reshid Páshá by another road of thirty-eight hours: they were to start at midnight, and I was recommended to accompany them, which I intended to do, notwithstanding that

* Kinneir makes the distance between Bitlís and Se'rt sixty-three miles; he probably travelled by a different road.—*Ed.*

† Se'rd and Se'rt in the Jihán-Numá, pp. 436, 439.

‡ Kinneir says about 3000 persons in 1814.—*Ed.*

§ Or, I'lchí, *i.e.* Ambassador.

we had only arrived at sunset: but they departed without me. My horses and cattle being extremely fatigued, I hired mules to relieve them for three marches, but they proved a source of great vexation; their slow pace, and the muleteers' habit of halting every farsakh, led to hourly disputes with them.

The following information was given to me at Se'rt: the city of 'Amádyáh is said to be forty-eight hours south-east from Se'rt, but it seems unlikely to be at so great a distance.* From Se'rt to Bitlís there are three roads of sixteen, eighteen, and twenty-two hours respectively: we travelled by the road said to be eighteen hours. Besides this, there is a road of thirty-eight hours to Músh direct, which does not pass through Bitlís: this must be the road which Macdonald Kinneir supposes the ten thousand to have taken after they crossed the river which *he* calls the Khábúr† at Se'rt. Búhtán is a large district, which extends from Jezireh twenty-four hours to the north. Diyárbekir,‡ to which Se'rt is now attached, is twenty-four hours from the latter city. A little to the north of west of Se'rt, a high peak is visible, said to be distant twenty miles. It lies in Hhazán, a mountainous ridge which has not been subdued by the Turks, and where a number of Kurd Begs live in disorder and violence. North of Hhazán there is another district in the same state, called Motkah.

Macdonald Kinneir, and I believe D'Anville also, says, that Se'rt represents the ancient Tigranocerta, and was founded by Tigranes the Great, a descendant of Arsaces, the conqueror of Armenia. No traces of ruins were seen by me in the very cursory inspection I was able to bestow between sunset and dark, but I was informed that some do exist. St. Martin says that D'Anville's conjecture is founded only on the apparent resemblance of the last part of the word Tigranocerta to Se'rt: he contends that Amida on the east bank of the Tigris, now Diyárbekir on the west bank, occupies the site of Tigranocerta. The Armenians, he says, call the city of Tigranes, Tigranogerd, and all their writers consider it to be the same as Amida. Tigranocerta, St. Martin states to have been thirty-seven hours from Nisbin, which is certainly less than the distance between Se'rt and that city; neither is Se'rt near Mount Masius, which separated the two cities. Tigranes the Second, or the Great, was defeated by Lu-

* In Colonel Monteith's map of Armenia, the town of Amádyáh lies 57 geographical miles south-east, and Diyár-bekr 70 geographical miles west-south-west of Se'rt: this does not at all agree with the information obtained here, but the true position of any of these places, and especially of Amádyáh, is unknown.—*Ed.*

† Kinneir must be mistaken in calling this river the Khabúr; it is only known here as the Bitlís Chái or Se'rt Sú—and there can be little doubt it flows about south to the Tigris: the Khabúr must rise in Amádyáh, as has been already pointed out in Rich's Kurdistán. All our maps are wrong in this point.—*Ed.*

‡ Diyár Bekr, the tents or houses of Bekr. The i in Bekr is a Turkish addition.—*F. S.*

callus near Tigranocerta, about sixty-seven years before Christ. He was the descendant of Arsaces the Great, or Mithridates, who conquered Armenia one hundred years after the Parthian conquest of Persia by Arsaces the First (about two hundred and fifty years b. c.). Tigranes the First lived in the reign of Cyrus: he was a descendant of Haig, who 2200 b. c. left Babylon, and founded the kingdom of Armenia.

July 29.—After much trouble we discovered the barn in which the Kurd muleteers had hid themselves to avoid a night-march. We left Se'rt at four A.M., attended by an 'Osmánlí horseman belonging to the governor. After travelling two miles, we saw the Bitlis Cháï, two or three miles distant on the right, and at the third mile passed through the flourishing village of Shírván, of about 200 houses, lying on both sides of the road. At about the sixth mile, over a tolerably good road, we reached the Bitlis Cháï, now swelled into a moderately large river. We proceeded three miles down its left bank, and then forded it a short distance above a small fort on a hill called Gardil. The breadth of the river was about fifty yards, the current rapid, and the depth less than knee-deep. If Macdonald Kinneir's opinion that the Ten Thousand crossed the river which he calls the Khábúr in the vicinity of Se'rt be correct, this ought to be the spot, supposing the information that I had received at Se'rt of there being only one ford in that neighbourhood, to be true.

In passing close to the small fort on the hill, the 'Osmánlis proposed that we should "enter and rest, and eat, and smoke, and drink coffee." This, as the stage was distant, we resisted, upon which they all took their departure, and left us to pursue the journey without them, telling us they would rejoin us afterwards. The road lay at a short distance from the river: at the tenth mile the latter ran towards the east, while the road was nearly south; at the eleventh mile we were again near the river, and at the fifteenth mile we left it altogether, our road being nearly in the same direction: the road was good, and lay, after passing the Bitlis Cháï, through the valley in which the river flows.

The Kurd muleteers had been constantly protesting most bitterly and loudly against the rapid pace at which we travelled. To rest our fatigued horses we were all mounted on mules, and these we never urged beyond a moderate walk. They frequently pressed us to dismount and halt, but we always refused compliance. At last, when we arrived at a most inviting spot for grazing, they lost all patience, and one, who had a gun in his hand, came up and said, in the most positive language his Turkish would admit of, that we must halt. Perceiving that I disregarded him, he took hold of the bridle and endeavoured to turn the mule's head. I hit him a blow on the arm with my stick, on

which he released the mule and put himself into a violent passion and flourished his gun with great energy. As I perceived that he had not removed the piece of cotton cloth which is placed in the pan to preserve the powder, and that he therefore could not fire, I took no notice of his antics, but one of my servants dismounted and collared him: they both began to struggle so violently that it became necessary for myself and the other Kurds to interfere and separate them. Both were armed, but neither for a moment thought of using his weapons; a blood-feud is too serious a thing to be readily incurred even in Kurdistán. Seeing that we were determined not to be forced into compliance, they discontinued their opposition and remained behind, protesting that their wives and children would be ruined, as the mules would surely die. This little altercation produced a very advantageous change in the conduct of these Kurds, who during the two subsequent days that they remained with us were very civil and tractable.

Soon after this we saw a river on the left, and asking the 'Osmánlí the name of it, he replied that it was the Búhtán Cháï: supposing this to mean the Khábúr of Kinnier, the river I have called Bitlís Cháï, I inquired no further, as the name of Khabúr is not known here. At about the eighteenth mile we arrived at the village of Til,* belonging to Se'rt, with a small fort on a hill near the Tigris, which the 'Osmánlí guide and several of the Kurds persisted, in spite of my explanations, in calling the Murád. They agreed that it was the river which flowed by Músul and Jezireh-ibn 'Omar, and I therefore conclude it was the Tigris.

We halted three hours under a tree, where we were joined by the chief of the village and half the inhabitants, who seated themselves about me without the slightest ceremony. An 'Osmánlí or a Kurd considers himself entitled to take a great deal of liberty with every one not a Muselmán, and that he himself, however humble his rank, is superior to every Frank; yet to their superiors of their own religion they show an abjectness resembling that of India, and far exceeding anything practised in Persia. Not a syllable of Turkish was understood by these Kurds, who appeared in complete ignorance of everything beyond their own village.

The chief had ordered breakfast, and when it was ready a long narrow table-cloth of decayed leather, or rather a hide, full of dirt and patches, was spread on the ground: on it were laid four bowls of boiled lamb and broth; the host gave the signal in the name of God, and the havoc began. They washed their hands neither before nor after eating, and seizing the meat with both

* Tell in Arabic, a hill or mound.—F. S.

hands, tore it with their teeth : not a morsel was left undevoured. They then began to discuss what was to be done with me. I was like a bale of goods ; each chief had charge of me when I was in his district, sent me out of it in safety, and got a receipt when there was any one that could write.

While we were at breakfast several shots were fired ; but of these neither I, nor apparently any one else, took the least notice. I afterwards learnt that they proceeded from the people of the village and those of Búhtán, who lived on the other side of the river called Búhtán Chái : they were skirmishing from opposite sides of the river.

We proceeded a mile up the left bank of the Tigris, which we forded ; it was at least 150 yards in breadth, nearly waist deep, and very rapid. We were now in the Páshálik of Diyárbekr. We then proceeded nearly a mile down the right bank, and reached the village of Móyen close to the river : there was an abundance of vineyards about this village : the vines were not planted in ridges as in Persia, nor trained on stakes as in Europe, but were dispersed irregularly over the fields. To each house there was attached a high platform erected on poles and covered with twigs and leaves ; here the people slept on account of the heat.

From this point I saw a river, which since reading Rich's Kurdistán, I believe to be the Bitlís or Se'rt river, falling into the Tigris from the north, at a short distance below the village of Til.

At about the twenty-first mile we proceeded nearly south, leaving the Tigris flowing to the east, and after four miles of very fatiguing ascent and descent the road again approached close to the river, which was now flowing a little to the eastward of south : the Tigris was not above ninety yards in breadth, but very rapid, and said to be very deep : high mountains lay on both sides of the river, and Búhtán was on the left bank.

Late in the evening, at about the thirtieth mile, we reached the large village of Chelek, of four or five hundred houses, inhabited by Kurds and Ya'kúbi* Christians, and defended by a strong handsome castle on a rock, in which the chief resides. We were treated here with much inhospitality ; the chief neglected to furnish us with any food or corn, and the inhabitants refused to sell anything, on the plea that they possessed only a sufficiency for their own wants : this is a frequent inconvenience in Kurdistán, where the people are unwilling to sell anything ; and on the present occasion neither the entreaties nor the remonstrances of the guide were attended with the least effect. He at last contrived to procure our most urgent want, corn, probably by bribing the servants of the chief, but I did not consider any scrupulous inquiry at all necessary.

* 'Jacobite.'—F. S.

Opposite to the village, on the other side of the river, in Búhtán, there was much cultivation, with the owners of which, the villagers told me they skirmish daily. The heat is so great here, that the greater part of the inhabitants had spread their bedding close to the river on the damp sand; they said that it would be otherwise impossible to obtain any sleep. We had latterly experienced considerable inconvenience from the necessity of travelling all day in the sun, but we in general found abundance of fountains in the hills near the road: this water is extremely cold, yet we drank it with impunity in the greatest heat; a hot wind blew during the entire day and night.

July 30.—We left Chelek at 4 A.M., accompanied by a guard of four Kurds on foot, besides the 'Osmánlí. It was a pity they had no language, as the Persians say of a man who cannot talk Persian, for more civil, attentive fellows, I never met. They were employed the entire march in helping me over streams, removing bushes, branches, and stones, which lay on the road, and in stealing cucumbers from the fields we passed through; the latter vegetable is so good and wholesome, that people eat a dozen of them without suffering any injury.

We travelled two miles near the bank of the river, and then left it flowing about S.E. while we proceeded to the south, nor did we see it again until we reached Jezíreh-ibn Omar. On leaving the Tigris, we ascended some hills, and soon after crossed a wide torrent flowing from nearly north, called the Só-úk Szú.* We then ascended a hill, near the top of which we passed through a tunnel of rock twenty yards in length and about twenty feet in height and breadth: the Kurds could give no account of this excavation, excepting that they believed it to be the work of men: it had the appearance of being artificial, but the object for which it was made was not very apparent, as it was near the top of the hill; the road through it was incumbered with rocks, which had either fallen from the sides, or been left there when the work was discontinued. Below the hill lay the village of Hesív, in a narrow valley, encompassed by wheat and barley fields, still green, and by extensive vineyards.

About the ninth mile, we passed over a rocky mountain, in part of which steps had been cut, together with holes for horses' feet; beneath, on our right, lay the village and long valley of Derije,† where rice, cotton, melon, cucumber, and pumpkin grounds were cultivated to a large extent. The road, though in general tolerably good, was sometimes exceedingly bad; the mountains had lost much of the magnificence of those in the neighbourhood of Se'rt, and on the left bank of the Tigris; but they were still high and

* Cold water.—F. S.

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† Derehjí?—F. S.

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well covered with wood ; these chiefly consist of stunted oak, oak bushes, fir, holly, and a few elms, together with raspberries, blackberries, barberries, and a profusion of smaller plants. After passing near two other villages, and through a great deal more cultivated ground than usual, we arrived at the Ya'kúbí [Jacobite], village of Kermó. We had been eight hours on horseback, but the road being very bad, and there being besides much ascent and descent, the distance did not probably exceed twenty miles.

At Kermó, the inhabitants were most civil and hospitable ; they lodged me in a hut made of leaves and branches of trees, which in summer is a far more agreeable residence than a house : the women are dressed in a red cotton petticoat, red jacket, and a red veil or sheet, which reaches to the ground. On their heads they wear a string of silver coins. Kermó contains about a hundred houses.

A large concourse of the villagers assembled round me ; they kissed my hand and said, that like all Franks, I was their brother : they called themselves Ya'kúbís, or Suryánís,* enemies, as they express it, of the Nestorians, but friends with the Kátólíks, the Armenians, and Kupts † of Egypt : their language, they said, was Syrian, but that they also spoke Arabic ; and they added, that throughout the Pásháliks of Diyárbekr and Músul, their church was the most powerful. Their belief seems to be, that Jesus Christ possessed two natures, divine and human, and one will, while the Nestorian creed ascribes only one nature to him.†

July 31.—We mounted at midnight, and travelled for eight miles by a continued, but almost imperceptible descent : we then descended a hill, and arrived in an immense rocky plain, with low hills dispersed over it, of which none of the bounds were visible, excepting towards the north : the plain is called by the same name as the small town we were marching to, Mediyád. It is crowded with villages, and in spite of the stones which filled every field, covered with unirrigated cultivation, but of poor and scanty crops. In some of the fields the stones were piled up to the height of fifteen feet. The only water procurable in this plain is from wells of great depth, covered at the top with a large stone perforated to admit a bucket. The inhabitants are Ya'kúbís and Kurds, with a few Yezídís ; the Christians do not, like other Kurds, in general carry arms, excepting on a journey, but all possess rifles : in their bearing and appearance, they resemble the manly and independent Nestorians of Azerbajján, without any of

* Syrian.—F. S.

† Kubts.

† This is not quite correct ; the Jacobites are not strictly monophysites ; *i. e.*, they acknowledge only one nature in Christ, the two being amalgamated into one. (Mosheim, iv. 259.) These Jacobites were probably converts to the Church of Rome.

the meanness which a long course of servitude has imprinted on the countenance and character of the Armenians.

We arrived at Mediyád after ten hours' travelling, or twenty-eight miles: both our baggage and riding horses were so exhausted that a slow walk is the utmost they could be urged to do; the village is large, and inhabited chiefly by Ya'kúbís, and here the governor of the district, an 'Osmánlí, resides. We proceeded to his dwelling to obtain quarters, but he was absent: this house was a long narrow building twenty-five yards in length, the rooms being in an upper story with a wide gallery in front. This was filled with a crowd of 'Osmánlí servants, who scarcely condescended to answer our questions; it was declared impossible to obtain a house, but we were offered the use of the guest's room. I found this to be an extremely comfortable apartment, well supplied with couches, cushions and carpets; but being already occupied by several 'Osmánlís, I preferred an uncarpeted room which was offered in its place. No breakfast was forthcoming after our long march, which was a very unusual piece of inhospitality. I visited the Jacobite church, where I met one of the priests of the village; the burial-ground surrounded the church, and from it issued the abominable smell of bodies in a state of corruption. The church was as bare as the most earnest lover of simplicity could desire, but this probably arose more from poverty than from any other cause. The priest showed me two books in Syriac characters, which he said were the Bible and Prayer-book: he declined selling them, on the ground that they would be replaced with difficulty. Besides the church which I saw, there is a large new one at a short distance, of the magnificence of which the people boasted highly: the priest deplored their poverty; he said that a man possessing two bullocks was rich, and that if he displayed a greater number the Kurds, or Yezídís would certainly steal them; the latter were represented as being much worse than the other Kurds.

Mediyád is placed on the direct road between Jezfreh-ibn 'Omar, and Diyárbekr.

In several of the villages in the plain of Mediyád almost every house was surmounted by a loop-holed turret, reminding one of what Xenophon says, after crossing the river Centrites, on entering Armenia, "upon most of the houses there were turrets."

When we were about to depart from Mediyád, the whole of the 'Osmánlí servants, forgetting their previous neglect, assembled round me, demanding "bakhshish," *i. e.* a present. The Turks have the reputation of being insatiable on this point: it never occurred during this journey; but it is said, that whenever a visit

is paid to a man of high rank, his servants* insist that the honour shall not be enjoyed gratis, and demand payment forthwith: this disagreeable custom has no existence in Persia.

August 1.—We left Mediyád at 9 p.m. yesterday. The road was bad and stony, and soon led us through the defiles formed by low hills. At about the twentieth mile we reached the Jacobite village of Eh'báb, where we halted for an hour; the general direction of the road had been south and south-east-by-south. After leaving Eh'báb we ascended some steep hills by an exceedingly bad road, so obstructed by large stones that our tired horses could scarcely make any progress. We then proceeded through a defile three miles in length, called the Pass of Eh'báb, after which we descended full 1500 feet into an immense plain, which, for want of another name, I shall call the Plain of Jezireh, although it reaches, at least on the right bank of the Tigris, as far as Músul, and perhaps Baghdád. After the fatigue and vexation of travelling so long among mountains, it was now delightful to behold the prospect of performing a part of our journey on level ground.

After travelling three miles over the plain, in a south direction, we arrived at a mud fort on a mound, with a ruined village beneath, called Ernúz. I entered the fort, and was introduced into the chief's apartment, an almost naked room, covered in part with a tattered carpet. He was a wild-looking, dissipated little 'Osmánlí, who had been placed there by Reshid Páshá, in his recent progress from Diyárbekr to Jezíreh. After the Khúsh-geldiniz, "you are welcome," and coffee, he proceeded to display his qualifications as a judge, in a case which my appearance had interrupted. A Jew and a Christian accused a Muselmán of theft: before the complaint had been concluded, and without the presence of the accused, this lover of good order swore, by all the prophets he could muster, that he would fine him 200 krúsh,† or 2*l.*, and he kept his promise. The thief and a witness were brought in; the judge enjoined the latter to tell the truth,— "Pesawink, kúpek oglí"—"Sir Pandarus, you son of a dog, if you tell a lie I will cut your throat;" and he looked as if he would do it. After hearing the evidence, he ordered the fine to be paid. "Listen to my witnesses," said the accused; "You son of a dog's dog, pay the money, or I will rip open your belly," shouted this mad 'Osmánlí. He kept half the fine, and gave the other to the complainants. He then proposed to me to drink arrack with him, but fatigued with the long ride of twelve hours, although the distance was only thirty miles, and with the clamour in his room, I left his house, and passed the day under a tree,

* It is not usual in Turkey to visit a great man without making a present to him and his servants; but this is not absolutely demanded.—F. S.

† Or Ghurúsh, *i. e.* Piastres.

exposed to a strong hot wind. He was extremely civil in supplying us with food and corn, which was fortunate, as none would have been procurable in the village. He visited me in the evening, and brought with him a bottle of arrack, which he protested was excellent, and insisted on my tasting it. He informed me that the villages in his neighbourhood were inhabited by Kurds, Jezídís, Ya'kúbís, and a few Jews; and that the languages they used were Kurd, Arabic, and Syriac. A vast number of mounds were scattered over this plain; some were bare, others had forts on their summits, and villages below.

August 2.—We mounted last night at ten P.M., the extreme heat rendering it difficult to travel during the day. We were accompanied by an 'Osmánlí courier, and four Kurds on foot, whom the chief of Ernúz considered it necessary to send with us, from apprehension of the Yezídís, from whose incursions, he said, the road was not perfectly safe. These Kurds were themselves Yezídís, but nothing could persuade the 'Osmánlí courier to question them regarding their religion. He declared that any allusion to it would give them deep offence; and besides, they knew nothing whatever about it. Our general course was east and east-by-north. The road for fifteen miles was level, and extremely good, after which it again became covered with large stones. We passed through two villages, called Seseyán and Khánék. At the latter place we were detained two hours in changing the Kurds, without whose protection the 'Osmánlí refused to move. At ten A.M. we arrived at the almost ruined village of 'Aín-ser, where we fortunately found a few trees to pass the day under, but where no food of any description was to be got at any price.

The plain abounded in villages, but many had been destroyed by Reshíd Páshá three months before, in his passage from Diyárbekr to Jezíreh, in consequence of opposition to his troops by the Amír, or Chief of Búhtán, who had crossed the Tigris, and taken possession of this plain. We are approaching a lofty range of mountains, which seem to run north and south, and which, we are informed, are the mountains of Búhtán,* close to Jezíreh, on the left bank of the Tigris. The mountains called Zákhú Bing tághlar, "the thousand mountains of Zákhú," are also visible, bearing east, and extending east and west. In the evening we travelled five miles south, to the village of Tiláberí. The Múllá, or priest of the village, said that if it had not been for the recent presence of the army of Reshíd Páshá here, it would be impossible for me to travel accompanied by only five or six servants. A large quantity of tobacco was growing at this

* Bahdínán?

village. We were alarmed here by tidings that the plague was raging at Jezíreh, whither we were cautioned not to proceed: this news happily proved false, the disease being only an intermittent fever and ague, which probably always exists during summer in this hot climate. The plain we are in is an enormous meadow, covered with thick high grass.

August 3.—We left Tiláberí at midnight, accompanied only by the 'Osmánlí courier. We travelled by a good road through the same grassy, undulating plain, and reached Jezíreh-ibn 'Omar in six hours. About daylight, in passing through a village where there was some difficulty in finding the road, the courier seized a villager as a guide; but we had not proceeded above two hundred yards when twenty or thirty of the villagers sallied out to rescue their companion: the ground was unfortunately covered with large stones, with which they gave us a most unmerciful pelting, and bruised the courier, and one or two of the horses: he tried to explain that we were not what they probably mistook us for, a party of plunderers; but his Kurdish appeared not to be understood: the servants unslung their arms, with the apparent intention of making use of them, but I loudly urged them to retire and refrain from firing, knowing well that the destruction of our entire party would be the consequence of the death of any of the Kurds. One carbine was fired, but luckily without effect. The guide made his escape in the row, and we, having certainly the worst of the conflict, withdrew and were not pursued.

Two miles from Jezíreh we crossed a stream (running from the Tigris, I think, and rejoining it a few miles below), near the ruins of a bridge, of which no part of the arches is left. It was very massive, built of mortar and large stones, and faced with black stones one foot and a half square. We then descended about 300 feet the low hills which form the bank of the river, and crossed the small arm of the Tigris, which forms the island [Jezíreh], on which the town of Jezíreh is built.* It was only a few yards in breadth, and ankle deep at this season: near the part that we crossed, there was another bridge similar to the former, of which five arches are still remaining. The town occupies nearly the entire island, which is about two miles and a half in circumference: the town is of an oval shape, and is surrounded by a low wall, in ruins in many places, and without a ditch; the wall is faced like the bridge, with the same black square stones. From the low situation of the

* The town of Jezíreh, we learn from Mr. Ainsworth, who carried a mountain-barometer there in the spring of 1837, is about 900 feet above the level of the sea, and the extensive plain over which Colonel Shiel travelled to the south-west of the Tigris is at least 1500 feet in height. Mósul is about 350, Mardin about 3000, and Nisibin 1300 feet above the sea.—*Ed.*

town in the bed of the river, and from the height of the banks, the heat is extreme, and not a single tree is to be seen on the island or its vicinity. The most complete desolation existed in the town ; it was almost in ruins, and it was only after a long search that we were able to find a wretched hovel to pass the day in : no inhabitants were to be seen ; it absolutely contained none, excepting a few hundred sickly miserable soldiers. Plague, cholera, and war had ruined this city ; neither barley, nor straw, nor grass, could be got for our horses ; no bread, no firewood, nor anything else whatever for ourselves, either from the governor or the bázár ; the former was busy in preparing some soldiers for a marauding party across the river into Búhtán. Jezíreh had been the capital of Búhtán ; for several years the Amír had refused to pay tribute or acknowledge subjection to the Sultan ; Reshid Páshá had seized his capital, and he was now in rebellion in his own mountains, and had become so formidable that they were not free from apprehension at Jezíreh. It was, therefore, no matter of regret that I resolved while at Ván not to travel through his territories. When we were approaching the town, we heard three cannon shot, and thought they were actually engaged : the firing, however, was in celebration of the capture of Erbíl, by 'Alí Páshá of Baghdád. It was at Jezíreh ibn 'Omar that Macdonald Kinneir was imprisoned and heavily fined by the Kurd Beg. The large palace described by him is now completely in ruins : it is close to the eastern and larger branch of the Tigris ; and opposite to it, on the other side of the river, are two pretty white forts, which completely overlook the town. St. Martin says, that Jezíreh ibn 'Omar, the island of the sons of 'Omar, is called in Syriac, Zozartá Zabelítá, and Bazebda, and that it was situated in a country called Zabdícéné, conquered by Diocletian and Galerianus from Nársí, and restored to the Persians after the death of Julian. The Tigris appears to flow from the N.E., before it reaches the island, it then takes a bend and flows from the north : the mountains of Búhtán* are close to the left bank ; they look very dark and magnificent, and are so high as to have, even now, some snow on the peaks : they come from N.N.E., but at a short distance above Jezíreh they turn to about east, and slightly south, having an opening of two or three miles at the angle : the river follows the course of this range only a few miles below the town, when the mountains stretch towards the east and the river towards the south : where the river leaves the mountains there is a plain of fifteen miles, bounded on the south by the thousand mountains of Zákhú : the Búhtán range, as well as the Zákhú, which is visible, looks very rugged and formidable ; in the former there are said to be nu-

* Júdí Tágh ?

merous villages of Nestorians and Yezídís. It appearing hopeless to expect any food at Jezíreh, we left it two hours before sunset, in company with a kevvás, or courier, which was the only escort the governor had it in his power to grant. Our course for five miles was south, among low hills and near the bank of the river ; at the second mile we crossed the stream, over which the first bridge we saw before our arrival at Jezíreh was built. The Tigris was about 100 yards wide, not rapid, but apparently deep. After the fifth mile, our direction changed to S.E. by S., the river being a mile off, and the road lay through the same immense meadow through which we had been travelling, but it was totally without villages or inhabitants, notwithstanding that it was watered by many small streams. Many of the Kurd *Il's*,* it is said, who in summer live in Búhtán, pitch their tents here in winter. At about the twelfth mile, when our unfortunate baggage-horses were almost incapable of moving, we arrived some time after dark at a Kurd O'bá, or encampment, about a mile and a half from the Tigris : it consisted of some fifty tents of the tribe of Hesenánlí : the camp was pitched in a circle, near the centre of which the chief's tent was placed : the tents were made of coarse black woollen cloths for the walls, with neat roofs of wicker work, and round each tent the sheep, lambs, bullocks, and horses, which were all, excepting the latter, very numerous, and made a terrible din, were assembled. The kevvás took us, as a matter of course, and without any introduction, to the chief's, or guest's tent ; this was twenty yards in length, divided into two parts by a slight wicker-work, in one of which lived the Amír and the guests, in the other, the women of the chief : by mistake I entered the latter, and advanced to seat myself near four persons whom I supposed to be young men, the sons of the chief : they looked at me with surprise, but did not utter a word, or answer my "selámun 'aleíkum ;" at length a Kurd approached and requested me, though without any signs of displeasure, to withdraw. In the men's apartment there were fifteen or twenty people smoking their pipes, who took not the least notice of me ; one of them, however, shouted the word, guest, I suppose to the cook, for soon afterwards a dinner of bread, cold cabbage, curds, and honey, was brought in, upon which I made a most hearty meal. From the O'bá, the Zákhú range (western end of it), lay S.E.

August 4.—We left the O'bá accompanied only by the kevvás, nor had we a larger escort till we reached the encampment of 'Alí Páshá ; but it is probable that the present security can only be ascribed to the vicinity of Reshíd Páshá's camp, and that on other occasions greater precautions in travelling would be

* Hordes, or clans.—F. S.

necessary. We travelled along the banks of the Tigris through well-watered meadows nearly south, and at the fourth mile passed a stream from the north-west, which we were told was the river of Diyárbekr (?) ; at the fifth mile we reached the ferry of the Tigris ; it was the same spot at which Reshíd Páshá crossed the river with his guns and troops : the ferryman told us that he had used floats of inflated sheep-skins for transporting the former. We were delayed two hours from the want of boats : there were but two, and one was so large that the boatmen could not manage it ; besides which, there was a body of Kurd horsemen who were crossing from the opposite side. It was very amusing to observe the mode of crossing the horses : they were all collected together and urged by loud shouts into the water, while some twenty naked Kurds seized the manes of the leaders and swam over with them. These horses seemed to understand the affair completely ; but not so our Persian steeds, whose sires had never seen a river : they could only be induced to enter the water by pelting them with stones, and when they had swam half way across, they all suddenly wheeled round and returned : this manœuvre they repeated two or three times, but so tractable is the Persian horse, that some days afterwards, when we crossed the Záb, they swam over without the least hesitation. The stream which I was here told was the Diyárbekr river, enters the Tigris a few yards above the ferry, with a rapid current twenty-five yards in breadth. The Tigris is about 220 yards in breadth, with a rapid stream ; it comes from the N.W., and above the ferry bends and flows from the N.E. ; the west extremity of the Zákhú range bore from this E.S.E. ; the town of Zákhú is said to be E. by N. six hours, and placed in an island of the Khábúr, a little to the north of the Zákhú range : the city of 'Amádiyah is said to be N.E. We were informed that boats do not go up and down the river at this part. Keleks, or floats of inflated sheep-skins, descend from Diyárbekr to Músul, where the skins are sold. Having crossed to the left bank of the Tigris, we were in the meadow plain about six miles wide, which separates the Búhtán from the Zákhú range ; the former of these rises at least 3000, and the latter about 2000 feet above the plain. We marched to the south-east, while the Tigris took a bend to the south-west, and after two miles we reached the right bank of the Khábúr, flowing from the east and falling into the Tigris two miles to the right : we forded it knee deep, the stream being extremely rapid and fifty yards wide, but from the width of the banks it would appear that after spring it must be 300 or 400 yards in breadth. We then proceeded through well-watered uncultivated meadows, while immense plains of the same description stretched to the west and south on the right bank of

the Tigris; at about the twelfth mile a road branched off to Músul, said to be two days' journey distant. We then ascended a low ridge, the tail of the western extremity of the Zákhú range, which lay east from us three miles, and which was probably also the distance of the Tigris from the same spot: the ground between us and the Tigris was undulating. At about the fifteenth mile, the heat becoming extreme, we halted at an uninhabited fort on a hill, and were now a short distance to the south of the thousand mountains of Zákhú, the direction of which was as nearly as possible east and west. Reshíd Páshá had carried his guns from the ferry to the town of Zákhú, which was in the possession of the Amír of Ráwanduz. After capturing that place it was requisite to carry his artillery across the Zákhú range; but the badness of the road obliged him to send it down the banks of the Khábúr, and he transported it over the ridge we had just passed, by a road nearer to the Tigris.

While we were in this fort we were joined by a party of twenty horsemen from Akháltzikheh,* in the province of Kárs, who were proceeding to join Reshíd Páshá; their chief, a young man, called himself a Georgian, although a native of Akháltzikheh. The inside of the fort not being very clean, he asked permission to sit on my carpet, which was spread in the only shady place under the wall; neither of us had anything to eat, but he drank five cups of tea, and was inclined to continue his libations had I not requested him to desist. He spoke very little Turkish, but he described himself to be an adventurer proceeding to Reshíd Páshá's camp in search of service. He seemed to have succeeded in his pursuit, for I afterwards saw him in the camp in attendance on the Páshá. The Zákhú range is that which Macdonald Kinneir considers as having opposed the progress of the Greeks before they reached the Carduchi. Xenophon describes it to be a place where on one side of the Greek army there were exceedingly high hills, and on the other a deep river; and again, it is noticed as a spot "where the Tigris is, from its breadth and depth, absolutely impassable, no road appearing, and the craggy mountains of the Carduchi hanging over the river." The Zákhú range does not, as Macdonald Kinneir asserts, extend to the bank of the Tigris; on the contrary, it is six miles from it, and the intermediate country is far from being impassable: the Zákhú range is sufficiently rugged, but it does not appear to be impassable to infantry: the range seems to be extremely narrow, and to consist of a single ridge; yet after all, there are no other mountains that appear to represent, so well as those, the spot where the Greeks met with this impediment; for though the Búhtán range

* Or Akhiskah.

represents far more accurately the locality described by Xenophon, yet as in reaching it he must have crossed the Khábúr, it is difficult to suppose he would omit allusion to it; and it is strange that on crossing the Zákhú range he makes no reference to that river, as he must certainly have been close to it. If the Búhtán range were to take the place of the Zákhú range it would be necessary to convert the Erzen branch of the Tigris into the Centrites, which perhaps would place geographers in some difficulty. From the Zákhú range to Se'rt, through 'Amádiyah, is a long distance to march in seven days, as conjectured by Macdonald Kinneir. In the evening we continued our march, and after three hours, or nine miles, reached the village of Kherbenuz. The high road to Músul from the uninhabited fort was in the direction of S.S.E., but we proceeded nearly due east, close under the Zákhú range: the road occasionally was rather hilly, but more to the right it seemed very level; we still travelled through the same meadow. At night the grass is set on fire, and immense fires are to be seen in every direction: the black patches thus formed look like woods during the day, but not a single tree is to be seen. About the fourth mile from the fort we passed through a large grove without any village near it, dedicated to a saint; at the fifth we passed through the village of Merjsür. From Kherbenuz Zákhú city is said to be three hours E.N.E., and the pass leading to it is called Pavishmú; a large portion of the inhabitants is stated to be composed of Jews. We found excellent grapes at this village, but it was only by repeated remonstrances that we were able to induce the inhabitants to sell to us either food or forage: a furious hot wind blew the whole night.

August 5.—We left Kherbenuz at three A.M., and travelled about fourteen miles in five hours to a tree, near a stream, where we halted: for six miles we travelled E.S.E., and then turned into the Músul road from Zákhú at S.S.E., which of course separated us from the Zákhú range; the Kevvás was most anxious to proceed under the range where the villages are numerous, and where he probably expected good fare: he alleged that by approaching the Tigris, there was danger from the Arabs, who were in the habit of swimming over on their horses; but having heard that the lower was a better and nearer road, I forced him to proceed by it. The Zákhú range had diminished in height, but it had become steeper; its distance from the place where we halted might be about six miles. 'Amádiyah is said to be sixteen hours E. by N. The road was extremely good, and lay through an uncultivated, though sufficiently watered country. At two A.M. we mounted, and travelled four miles S.S.E., three miles S.E., and five miles S.E. by E. to the village of Dúlóm: the heat and glare were excessive, and were accompanied by a strong hot wind.

We were warned against the Bádi Shám, "the wind from Damascus,"* which comes suddenly with a very bad odour, and kills those on whom it takes effect. Garlic roots are said to be a sovereign defence against these gales, but it seems to be a love for the vegetable that has converted it into a medicine. On a very hot day a person brought me what seemed to be a bowl of milk ; on tasting it, I found it was full of garlic : I protested against such a compound. "There is no God but the Great God," said he ; "what can be better on a day as hot as hell than milk and garlic?"

This part of the eastern bank of the Tigris had been in the possession of the Amír of Ráwanduz, whose followers had destroyed this village on the approach of Reshíd Páshá. The inhabitants praised the discipline of the army of the latter. Músul is said to be twelve hours E.S.E. from this ; the Zákhú range appears to be about twenty-five miles in length ; the whole of it is not exactly E. and W. ; six miles before it reaches its eastern extremity, it runs from W.N.W. to E.S.E. and sinks into low hills ; it then rises again into steep, bare mountains, under the name of the Sótí range, which stretch east to the Záb (and perhaps further), under the name of the 'Amádýah and Zebári Mountains.

August 6.—Having heard that Reshíd Páshá had crossed the Záb, I determined to endeavour to overtake him, and left Dúlóm at midnight, with one pony lightly laden : the course for eighteen miles was about S.E. by E., and then two miles E.N.E. close under the Sótí range ; the road was good, and lay among low stony hills. At the third mile we passed close to the village of Gapán, at the ninth that of Dákah, and at the sixteenth that of Búndanah. Under the Sótí range there were many villages, which seemed to be placed in that position for the purpose of security. Our distance from those hills varied from a half mile to two miles : they are still low though steep, but further east they rise into high mountains : their direction is nearly E. and W. ; at the twentieth mile we reached the town of Elkósh. Elkósh is a large Kaşabah,† very strong, and built on the side of a low rocky hill ; it is surrounded by a strong stone wall, and the houses are built in the most substantial manner of the same materials ; all are arched at the lower story, and being built on a declivity, they rise above each other, which, together with all the houses being loop-holed and very strong, make it a place of great strength. Four years ago the Amír of Ráwanduz cut off the heads of three hundred people for resisting him in this town. The inhabitants are said to amount to two or three thousand people,

* Or from Syria ?—F. S.

† Market-town.—F. S.

who are all Roman Catholics, and speak nothing but Arabic. The men dress like Kurds of the poorer class; the women wear blue trousers, and over them a large blue shift: they wear no veils; the hair hangs down behind in two plaits or tails; round the head a garland of silver coins is placed. I often examined these coins, which the women allowed me to do without reluctance, in the expectation of finding ancient ones, but they generally consisted of old European coins.

Reshid Páshá's agent here was most civil: he got ready what I considered an excellent breakfast, but two hours afterwards another made its appearance of a most substantial description; the first was only the Kehwah-Altí the host declared, and he refused to partake until I pressed, which in an 'Osmánlí was an extraordinary piece of delicacy. After breakfast, in spite of fatigue and the intense heat, I visited one of the churches; it was a very extensive building, with walls of immense thickness, and was said to have been built by the Jews, to whom the town belonged, but at what time no one knew. The inhabitants themselves looked like Jews or Arabs, but with coarser features; their manner and air were perfectly independent, without the least approach to the servility of the oppressed Armenians. The altar resembled those used in Catholic churches in Ireland; candlesticks were placed on it and a covered chalice; nothing could exceed the simplicity of the whole church, apparently arising more from choice than poverty: there was nothing to disturb this effect except a small frame of woodcuts of French saints, of horrible execution, and among whom St. Louis took the lead. The priest of the church presented himself; he said they were Kátólíks, and obedient to the great Pápás in Italy; that they abstain from flesh on Wednesdays and Fridays; that the mass was in Kaldani* (not Syriac), in which language the Scriptures were written; and that the priests marry once: there was an immense Bible in the church, written in large Chaldee † characters. I then proceeded to view the synagogue. No Jews now reside in Elkósh, but it is much frequented by them as a place of pilgrimage. The synagogue is a large building, quite as substantial as the church, and, like all synagogues which I have seen, perfectly plain. No Jews are now attached to it; but at certain seasons they assemble from the neighbouring districts to visit the tomb of Náhúm Peighember, "the prophet Nahum," whose tomb is in the synagogue. The walls are covered with small Hebrew inscriptions on paper: there was a large Bible on two rolls of parchment, inclosed in a

* This is probably a mistake, as the Chaldee has been long extinct; perhaps there may be some difference of dialect between these Mesopotamians and the Western Syrians.

† Syriac; the Chaldaic character is the same as the common Hebrew.—F. S.

wooden cylindrical case, which opened in the middle ; the writing was beautiful, or the printing, for I could not distinguish which it was ;* there was an abundance of books in the synagogue in beautiful Hebrew characters. Two miles east of Elkósh, placed high among the crags of Sótí, there is a large and extraordinary-looking church, which heat, fatigue, and the lateness of the hour prevented me from visiting : the Catholic guide attached the highest importance to the edifice, though he did not seem to know exactly why, or perhaps we did not understand him, as he spoke nothing but Arabic. We quitted Elkósh at one o'clock, and travelled nearly east in a blazing sun, with an intolerable glare, the road being close to the Sótí range, which was low, perhaps 1000 feet above the plain, but rugged and steep ; at the twenty-second mile we passed the village of Borjá ; at the twenty-fourth mile the Yezidí villages of Hespédún and Taitah ; and at the twenty-eighth mile the Yezidí village of Bádú. All these were on the left, close under the Sótí range ; while on the right were the villages of Bóbán Teselier, and several whose names I could not learn. All these villages have forts attached to them ; there was one very remarkable-looking fort and village perched on a high mountain, with a rampart at the top. At the thirty-second mile, when we were passing through the Yezidí village of 'Ali Aghà, close to the Sótí range, and about a mile from the village where we intended to make our halt, several of the attendants of the chief rushed down from an eminence they were standing on, and seizing my horse's bridle, insisted upon my becoming their master's guest that night. Hoping that this would give me an opportunity of inquiring into their religion, I willingly complied. They conducted us to the roof of a house, where the chief, accompanied by a number of his relations, paid me a visit. Not one of them could speak anything but Kurdish. Coffee was brought, and soon after a large substantial dinner, with wheat instead of rice for piláú ; every one ate in the strictest silence, and every one of the twenty who formed the party despatched his dinner before we had time to begin. This was the third good meal we had had that day, and formed a strong contrast with our previous abstinence, for after the first march from Se'rt, I had eaten little but bread, which we had brought from Persia, and tea ; this sometimes arose from there being nothing procurable, and more frequently from the feeling of fatigue being greater than that of hunger. The whole party quitted me at the same moment, and gave me no opportunity of making inquiries ; I urged the kevvás to attempt it, but he declined to have anything to say

* Manuscript, no doubt, as rolls are never printed, and such would be an abomination to the Jews, whose synagogue rolls are written according to prescribed rules with great care.—F. S.

about it. We thus found these far-famed Yezídís the most civil people in Kurdistán ; they are reported to be the greatest robbers among their countrymen, and their civility may perhaps be ascribed to the vicinity of Reshíd Páshá. The common reason assigned for their being called Yezídís is their approval of the murder of Huseín, grandson of Mohammed, by Yezíd : they are said to worship, or at least to deprecate the Devil, calling him God : this would appear to suggest the opinion that the old religion of Persia is not eradicated from among those people, and that the Devil is the Principle of Evil, which, under the name of Ahrimán, the Gebrs worshipped as the equal of Hormúzd, the Author of Good. 'Amádiyah is said to be eight hours from 'Alí Aghá, and Músul to lie S.S.W.

August 7.—We left 'Alí Aghá at three A.M., and reached the village of Házirjút at ten, about twenty miles distant, having travelled over an excellent road and through a flat country : for eight miles we went E. then E.S.E. to Házirjút ; at the ninth mile passed near the village of Jewán, and soon after near the Yezídí village of Memvesh at the twelfth mile the high single mountain of Meklúb, rising abruptly from the plain about 1200 feet, was on our right, two miles distant. At the third or fourth mile the Sótí range disappeared, but it was soon succeeded by another remarkable, black, rugged, and bleak high range, perhaps 3000 feet in height, running in nearly the same direction E. and W. ; the name of this ridge is El Khaír, or the Mountains of 'Amádiyah, which lies on the other side of it : further east, this ridge bends a little to the south ; at the foot of it numbers of Yezídís dwell. Fourteen miles from 'Alí Aghá, we crossed a stream flowing from the N.E. called the Gómel. Most probably the battle of Arbéla took place somewhere in this neighbourhood. The ground is level as described by the historian, yet it is strange how he could avoid allusion to the remarkable range of El Khaír. From Házirjút nearly in the direction of east, a very high mountain was visible, which we were told was the mountain of Ráwanduz, distant twenty-six hours : this district is called Kalkúsh : it is level, and contains many villages, and a considerable quantity of cultivated ground. We left Házirjút at four P.M., and travelled in an east and east-by-north direction eight miles to Kelí, having passed near the villages of Ashtín and Khenáb Kendig. The El Khaír range here bends slightly towards the south : from Kelí another excessively bad pass into 'Amádiyah lay north-north-east, distant three miles. From Kelí 'Amádiyah is said to be twelve hours ; Tiyárí, the district of the Nestorians, fourteen hours, to reach which are passes through 'Amádiyah. Ráwanduz is twenty-four hours east by south, and Músul eleven hours west-south-west. At eight P.M. we left Kelí, and

travelled eight hours on a very bad and hilly road, but not impracticable for cannon, Reshid Páshá having conveyed his guns hither. After having travelled that day not less than thirty-five miles, we halted at a short distance from a village. The heat both night and day was very great.

August 8.—We marched at daybreak, and after two miles to the east and two miles to the north, over hilly ground, we arrived near the town, or rather large village, of Akereh, of about five hundred houses, surrounded by fine gardens. We learned that Reshid Páshá had left Akereh the day before, and had proceeded farther eastward: he had besieged, or rather surrounded the fort for twenty-two days. It is a very strong castle, placed on a rock projecting from El Khaïr, the town being at the foot of the rock. He contrived to bring a couple of guns to bear on the masonry of the wall above the rock, upon which the garrison surrendered, though without the least necessity; for even if he had succeeded in breaching it, he had no troops that would storm such a breach. None of the gardens about Akereh were destroyed or plundered, which shows the progress the Turks have made in this important point of discipline; the same remark is applicable wherever they marched. After leaving Akereh, we went twelve miles in an easterly direction, and then three miles to Reshid Páshá's camp: we travelled at the foot of the El Khaïr range, crossing the hills at its base, from which many torrents gushed: several villages were placed high in the inmost recesses of the mountain, and being in general surrounded by trees and some cultivation, presented a delightful contrast to the adjacent sterility. The peasants who passed us spoke no language but Arabic, so that, having no interpreter, we could not make any inquiries: we were even deprived of our very useless kevvás, who vanished most unaccountably in the morning; nor did he ever appear to claim his fee. At the tenth mile we passed through the large village of Zin-jí, inhabited by Arabs: close to it there is a violent torrent with a stone bridge over it, and a path leading to Ad-desht,* which appears to be a level tract lying between 'Amádiyah and Zebári. The torrent seems to have cut down the rock three or four hundred feet, and the pass is only practicable to men on foot. It is certainly a strange and gloomy defile: rice, cotton, pomegranates, figs, &c. grow here in abundance. The El Khaïr range soon afterwards loses its steepness and sterility, and becomes lower and more verdant; the mountains extend as nearly as possible from east to west; the Záb is said to flow on the other or northern side. At the fifteenth mile we reached the camp, which was pitched on a mountain at some distance from any village.

* The plain.

August 9th.—On the 9th the extreme heat and burning wind rendered me exceedingly ill; I was attacked by a violent pain in the side, and complete loss of strength and energy, but no fever; it appeared to be a sort of stroke of the sun: my arm and shoulder became red and painful; I was covered with blisters. In consequence of this, I removed on the 10th to a deserted village, one mile and a half from the camp; in the afternoon, having learned that the Páshá was about to march, I prepared to follow him. We marched north into the district of Zebári, crossing the range, which is a continuation of the Mountains of 'Amádiyah, but, though very high, not having the same rugged, barren aspect: the ascent was extremely fatiguing, and the descent in the dark nearly as much so. We travelled about ten miles to the camp, which was placed in a fine valley with several villages in it, but uninhabited; grapes, figs, and walnuts grew wild: no one knew the name of this valley, but the Záb was said to be three hours to the N.E. There were no Kurds in this camp, which was a small one of 2000 men, the greater part of the army, 7000 regular infantry, being in advance some miles. One Kurd whom I met told me we were in the district of Zebári, which had been attached to 'Amádiyah before the Amír of Rawandúz seized the latter Páshálik. Tiyári, he said, lay to the N.W., 'Amádiyah W.N.W., and Rawandúz E.S.E. He described the district of Zebári as being one day's journey and a half in length, from north to south, and one in breadth, and as consisting entirely of mountains. That of 'Amádiyah, he stated to be eight days' journey in length and four in breadth, which I cannot avoid thinking is an exaggeration.

August 13.—On the 13th I paid my farewell visit to the Páshá.

On descending the Zebári range, we could see the Záb flowing from the E.N.E. Several strings of camels passed us laden with grain for Reshíd Páshá's camp. This animal seems able to travel in all situations; mountains and plains, blazing sun, frost and snow, seem alike to him. These were beautiful animals of their kind, unlike the awkward heavy camels of Persia and India; they were slender, active creatures, and nearly white; they were Arab camels, and came from the plains on the west side of the Tigris; but every animal thrives in Arabia; man, (in form at least,) the horse, camel, ass, goat, are all excellent.

We left the village in the afternoon of the 13th, in company with a kevvás, who was ignorant of the road: we went five miles S.E. by S. over low hills, and then S.S.W. four miles, through a woody ravine filled with vines and blackberries, to the small village of Jelam, which formerly belonged to the Amír of Rawandúz. The people fearing, no doubt, that there would be no payment, were most anxious to induce us to proceed to another

village, which they pretended was close; but when they found that we resolved to stay, they were extremely civil: the old chief of the village complained that his son was forcibly detained at Rawandúz as a soldier; it seemed to be the Amir's plan to retain his subjects in good order by taking a male from each family into his service.

August 14.—We left Jelam at day-break, and travelling in the general direction of S.E. by S. for ten miles, over low grassy hills, we reached Dáb, a small village on the right bank of the Záb, which flowed from nearly north; after great detention in procuring skins to make a kelek, or float, we crossed to the left bank: the stream is rapid and about 100 yards in breadth, and said to be deep. The kelek is formed by tying a number of inflated skins under an open frame and covering the whole with branches of trees; it makes a very commodious conveyance. This was guided by two men, each of whom had a large hollow calabash under his arm: one of these watermen took a string in his hand and swam across, dragging the kelek with him, and putting one in mind of the horses applied to a similar purpose on the Oxus; the other pushed it from behind. The Záb is supposed to be the Zabatus of Xenophon and the Lycus of Arrian; the latter mentions, that immediately after the battle of Arbéla, Alexander crossed the Lycus with his troops, and proceeded to Arbéla by midnight. After crossing the Záb, we travelled among hills in almost every direction, though the general course was S.S.E. for four hours, or twelve miles. We passed at a distance several villages, which were almost all deserted, the inhabitants having built upon some neighbouring cool spot a new village of huts formed of leaves and branches. On the approach of winter, they return to their far less agreeable, permanent residences. We then travelled eastward for two hours, and came in sight of 'Alí Páshá's camp. It was now dark, and after scrambling for another hour through a very bad road among hills, we were at length unable to proceed, and halted near a stream, where we passed the night without any food for ourselves or our horses.

August 15.—We marched three miles eastwards to an eminence, on which a portion of the army of 'Alí Páshá of Baghdád was encamped, under Mustáfa Páshá; at the summit of the eminence was the small fort of Darvín, which had been taken two days before.

August 16.—We left the camp at day-break, and proceeded in the direction of S.S.W. over low hills for eighteen miles, and then travelled for four miles to the village of Beherkah, across the plain of the Tigris. In the evening we travelled ten miles S.S.W. to Arbéla.* the road was excellent and level, and far to the left

* Erbil in Arabic.

lay the mountains of Kurdistán: the town is placed on a large mound sixty or seventy feet in height, and 300 yards in length by 200 in breadth; it is inclosed at the summit, with a brick wall having bastions, with a few small guns in them: at the foot of the mound there is another town, inclosed by a mud wall, a great part of it being in ruins, in which respect it resembles both the upper and lower town; the latter especially is almost desolate. There are no ruins or remarkable buildings. A short distance to the west of the town, there is an immense brick pillar standing by itself in the plain; it looks old, but seems to be a Mohammedan building; nothing is known of it excepting that it once was the minaret of a mosque. I saw no river near Erbil, and the people declared that there is none. The troops of the Amír of Rawandíz made a short resistance at this place, but a small and ineffectual mine having been exploded in the mound, they were alarmed, and surrendered. Erbil contains 6,000 people, three large mosques, and two baths. The next march being a long one, and the heat being very great, we halted at Erbil until the evening of the 17th; we then marched in a S.S.E. direction across a flat plain, and passed two villages at a short distance. After a fatiguing march of about forty miles, we reached Altún Kúprí at sunrise. This town is placed on an island in the Altún Sú,* (which I suppose is the little Záb,) which we crossed into the town by a bridge, whence the town is said to have been named on account of the lucrative toll formerly levied, Altún Kúprí meaning 'gold bridge.' The river was shallow, but is deep at other seasons, and about fifty yards wide before it divides: it was flowing from the N.E., and rises in U'shneh, a district of Persia, near the Urumiyah lake. The chief of this town was extremely civil; he gave me a room overhanging the river, and thirty feet above it, commanding a fine view of the country. This town is said to have formed the boundary of the acquisitions of the Amír of Rawandúz to the south. Altún Kúprí, according to the statement of the chief, once contained 8000 people, but plague and famine had greatly thinned it.

August 18.—We left Altún Kúprí in the evening, and travelled S.S.E., and after halting four hours during the night, reached Kerkúk in the morning. The distance was said to be twenty-five miles; we were still accompanied by our very useless guard of Arabs, who, however, amused us by singing songs. Arabs, Kurds, and Persians, seem to think the chief excellence of music is loudness: these fellows sang, or rather roared, with wonderful vigour, but not unpleasingly: their favourite song was that of their tribe, in praise of the nobility, courage, generosity, and hospitality

* Gold River.

of their Sheïkh. Each line seemed to consist of three or four words, and then a chorus of the word Sheïkhá : the music was very monotonous, *Java*, without any of the disgusting thrilling used in Persian singing, which I believe is in imitation of the nightingale. Three miles before reaching Kerkúk we passed several naphtha pits, which diffused a disagreeable odour to a considerable distance. In Kerkúk, naphtha is used for lights and fire. Kerkúk is a large open town in a plain, and, like all the towns in this part of the world, is in great part in ruins: plague, famine, and, I believe, cholera have almost destroyed it. Near to it is a fort built on a mound, not very high but steep. It is said to have no manufactures except a coarse calico, but there is a considerable trade in gall-nuts, which are brought from the Kurdistán mountains. The river of Kerkúk, called the Kháshéh Cháï, was now dry: here we saw, for the first time, date trees, which would have reminded us, if it were necessary, that we were now in a very hot climate. The inhabitants are Arabs and 'Osmánlis, with some Christians and Jews, but no Kurds. The women wear immense turbans, which has a very strange effect to a person not accustomed to see females in the East with that head-dress.

August 19.—We left Kerkúk after sun-set in the evening of the nineteenth, and travelling in the general direction of east, arrived before daylight at an O'bá or summer encampment of Kúrds, whose village was behind one of the neighbouring hills. The distance was about twenty miles, of which half was among hills, with a good deal of ascent.

August 20.—We left the O'bá on the evening of the 20th of August, and, travelling still in the same direction, arrived in the morning at a large village, which belongs to Suleimániyeh, distant about twenty-eight miles. The road was exceedingly bad, winding among defiles, with a great deal of ascent and descent: about the twentieth mile we crossed a wide torrent called the Waï Sú, which probably afterwards becomes the Diyálah, flowing to the south-west. All the people in this village were encamped in huts at a short distance from the village: we were lodged in a most comfortable hut, close to the tomb of a holy man, a descendant of the famous 'Abdúl-kádir Gilání, who is interred at Baghhdád. Almost all our party had been for some days unwell, but here there was a great increase of the sickness. The extreme heat was sufficient to account for this. We mounted at midnight, and travelled over an extremely bad road, intersected by ravines and hollows: at the fifth mile we entered a long and exceedingly strong defile with high mountains on both sides, and a road through it, not exceeded in difficulty by any we had travelled over. At the twentieth mile, after having crossed a very fatiguing ascent, the extreme heat obliged us to halt under a

few trees, with very imperfect shade. In the evening we marched eight miles to Suleimániyeh, by a good road, through a tolerably level, well-cultivated country. Suleimániyeh is a small town, of about 1000 houses, the capital of a district of the same name, in the centre of which it is placed, and which extends forty miles in every direction. It is possessed by the Kurd tribe of Bebah, who are esteemed excellent cavalry, and have many horses. I saw a mare for which the owner wanted 500 tómáns; and I have no doubt, that if even so large a price were offered him, he would be very reluctant to take it. The town is situated at the end of a plain under some hills: it contains few good houses, many of which are in ruins; and has a large and well supplied bázár of fruit, meat, and vegetables.

From Suleimániyeh I travelled in a N.N.E. direction about 200 miles, by a well-known road, to Sardasht, Láhiján, Só-úk Búlák, and by Marághah to Tabriz.

Tehrán, Feb. 12, 1837.

V.—*Memoranda to accompany a Sketch of part of Mázanderán, &c., in April, 1836.* By E. D'ARCY TODD, Major, serving in Persia. Communicated by JOHN BACKHOUSE, Esq.

THIS sketch of Mázanderán on the scale of $\frac{382160}{100}$, or of six British miles to an inch, was made in the month of April, 1836, from observations taken with a Schmalcalder's compass, the distances being calculated from the pace of a horse walking on an average three and three-quarters statute miles an hour.

The lines of road here followed were corrected by frequent magnetic bearings* of the peak of Demávend, which is visible from Tehrán, and from most of the principal points in the routes from that city, through Mázanderán, to the southern shore of the Caspian.

Wheeled carriages are not used in any part of the road here laid down.

On quitting Tehrán in an E.N.E. direction, at fifteen miles the Jáz-rúd river is crossed by a ford; but from the month of April to the middle of June, when the mountain snows are melting, it is often so much swollen that laden mules make a circuit of several miles to cross the river by a bridge, said to be about three miles above the caravanserai at the ford.

From Jáz-rúd to Demávend, a distance of twenty-five miles, the road is crossed by several small streams, upon each of which

* The variation of the compass at Tehrán in 1837 was 2° westerly.—Ed.